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ABSTRACT

Spanning the years 1932-1982, this book details the history of the National Conference on Research in English (NCRE) in terms of members' activities, research directions taken, and accomplishments. The first section of the book, "The Founding," reviews the initial efforts to establish the organization; examines its early programs; discusses the role of C. C. Certain in promoting the organization; describes its first publication, "A Handbook of English for Boys and Girls," published in 1939; and traces the evolution of the journal "The Elementary English Review," later "Elementary English." The second section, "The 1940s," continues the history from the death of Certain in 1940, discussing the activities of the organization during the years of World War II, its proposals for its merger with the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), and the publications of its bulletins. The third section, "The 1950s and 1960s," covers the "heyday" of the organization, reviewing its important meetings and large research efforts, The First Grade Reading Studies and The Teacher Effectiveness Study. The fourth section, "The 1970s," describes NCRE's efforts to engage the membership in cooperative research, discusses the Cooperative Research Committee, and examines attempts to expand membership, while the final section "And Now, What Next?" takes a look at the future of NCRE and offers comments from various past and present members of the organization. (FL)

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A History of the National Conference on Research in English

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CS 208 046

National Conference on Research in English

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Foreword

As this history of the National Conference on Research in English speaks for itself so well in terms of the members' activities, research directions taken, and past accomplishments, perhaps it is not amiss to do some looking ahead in this foreword. It seems to me that the decade of the 1980s has already begun to witness significant directions for the organization. For one, our publications are on the rise, begun by this history and to be followed by volumes on spelling, bilingual education, and writing research, to enumerate some nearing completion. The early years of this decade saw an NCRE-sponsored column, "Research Update," in *Language Arts*, as well as articles written by NCRE members. And more publications are being planned to cover important areas of research in reading and English education.

In 1983, the National Conference on Research in English made its first Award for Distinguished Research to Alvina Treut Burrows and will continue to present this award periodically. The Executive Committee felt there was no comparable award in the field and honored Burrows for virtually a lifetime of dedication as well as production of a major body of research. To be awarded NCRE's commendation, one must show lots of staying power.

Also in the decade of the 1980s, I hope to see the Conference members apply their considerable expertise to the English education and literacy issues involved in the communications revolution—as distinct from the industrial revolution—and in the dawning of what some call the information age. Our 1983 IRA and NCTE programs focused on some of these issues. The implications for language and literacy education are many, not well understood but crucial to creating an educated public. One implication I think we can see is that literacy and the ability to use English competently will become even more important as our society swings even further from the need for labor and to the provision of information and technology services for ourselves and the world.

These revolutionary changes and new times, plus age-old educational issues, await us as we continue our commitment to research in English education and literacy. But for us to move forward more

effectively, it is crucial for us to understand our past. So it is my distinct pleasure to write the foreword to a volume indicating where we have come from—from a desire to create knowledge, achieve greater understanding, and inform educational practice through research.

Johanna S. DeStefano
President, National Conference on
Research in English

Preface

When I was a graduate student at the University of Iowa in 1954, I was a guest of my major advisor, Harry A. Greene, at an NCRE breakfast in Atlantic City. This was an exciting experience. The "big names" of that time vigorously discussed their research plans and results; research was being done! It was obvious that NCRE was then *the* research organization in the English language arts field. I was, therefore, honored by the invitation to membership in 1958, a membership that I have appreciated more than any other.

Attempting to write a history of the organization has been an interesting experience, but it has also been a trying one. While NCRE members are obviously interested in research and in all aspects of the teaching and learning of the receptive and expressive English language skills and abilities, as well as being highly literate themselves, they are apparently not great savers of their correspondence.

The fact that NCRE has never had a central office nor provided other than minimal clerical/secretarial help for its officers, of course, largely accounts for the fact that the "paper trail" has been severed so frequently that anyone seeking to record fifty years of ideas and events is frustrated. I did have the help of many NCRE members. Roy A. Kress sent me about a hundred pounds of "records" that had been accumulated. While these were extremely helpful, too often meeting minutes were brief or simply missing, and there were no records for many years. Alvina Treut Burrows provided very complete records concerning the Teacher Effectiveness Study. Ethel Mabie Falk and Helen Knipp, both longtime members, sent packages of records, and Johanna S. DeStefano sent records of recent years. Helpful letters were received from Emmett A. Betts, Donald D. Durrell, Thomas D. Horn, Mildred A. Dawson, H. Alan Robinson, Lou LaBrant, and Ralph C. Staiger. Don was particularly helpful in recalling events concerning the First Grade Reading Studies, and Emmett provided me with information about NCRE's founding. Others related anecdotes and one or two events. I also used J. N. Hook's history of NCTE, *A Long Way Together*. And there have also been offers to help with research and writing. To all I am grateful.

Where records were available I am confident of the accuracy of what is reported here. However, I have interpreted and attempted to "fill in" where information was sparse. I have also quoted from correspondence, but I hope that I have done this discretely and only to help "tell the fifty-year story." For these reasons this may be more of a personal account than an ideal history should be.

Walter T. Petty
1982

1 The Founding

The National Conference on Research in English (NCRE) was founded in 1932 by members of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) who felt that both elementary school English teaching and research concerns were not receiving adequate attention in that organization. There apparently was some basis for such feelings since the National Council of Teachers of English had been founded in 1911 largely in reaction to the restrictions placed upon high school curricula by colleges and universities through their entrance requirements. The early leaders of NCTE were secondary school English teachers, supervisors and curriculum directors, and some forward-looking college and university professors. Early NCTE meetings reflected the concerns of these people and gave little attention to elementary school English. For example, the NCTE meeting program of 1920 does not even mention elementary school English. The same was true for the 1925 meeting program, although in between there were some section meetings labeled "elementary-junior high." On the other hand, by the 1930s there were several members of NCTE who were primarily interested in English teaching in the elementary schools. Such early NCRE leaders as Mildred A. Dawson, Marion R. Trabue, E. W. Dolch, Walter S. Guiler, and J. Conrad Seegers had written articles for *The Elementary English Review*, and the 1931 NCTE meeting had elementary school sessions with Maude McBroom, William S. Gray, and Trabue as speakers. *The Elementary English Review* (later *Elementary English* and now *Language Arts*) had been distributed to elementary members of NCTE beginning in 1929. Yet there is little doubt that NCTE membership was overwhelmingly oriented to the secondary school and primarily concerned with curriculum matters at that level of schooling. Too, the educational research movement, which had primarily developed since the turn of the century among psychologists, had not yet strongly affected this membership.

Leaders in the founding of NCRE were Harry A. Greene, Professor of Education at the University of Iowa, and Emmett A. Betts, who had completed his doctorate at Iowa and remained there in 1931 on a fellowship sponsored by Sterling A. Leonard and NCTE. Greene and

Betts apparently felt that W. Wilbur Hatfield, then executive secretary of NCTE, had rebuffed them when they requested the formation within NCTE of a group interested in research in elementary school English. Also, Maude McBroom, who was the principal of the campus elementary school at the University of Iowa and was the chairman* of NCTE's Committee on Elementary School English in 1931, had had her proposal for a language usage handbook killed by the Council. It is not clear whether this influenced Greene and Betts, but they shortly contacted C. C. Certain, Director of Libraries of the Detroit schools and owner and editor of *The Elementary English Review*, about their views. Certain readily agreed to the formation of such a group as Greene and Betts were proposing since he felt that his journal had not received adequate financial backing by NCTE. In addition, Certain and Hatfield had long been (and continued to be) antagonistic toward one another. Undoubtedly this relationship had a bearing upon Certain's response, but he also needed articles for his journal and Greene and Betts were proposing that their group publish bulletins reviewing research. Certain agreed to publish the proposed bulletins in *The Elementary English Review* as articles and to furnish reprints of these as bulletins for distribution to members of the new organization.

This initial effort was followed by a meeting during the Washington, D.C., convention in March of 1932 of the Department of Superintendence (now the American Association of School Administrators, AASA) of Greene, Betts, Superintendent David E. Weiglein of Baltimore, Dean Marion R. Trabue, and others, at which time further plans were made. Then in the summer of 1932, Greene, Betts, Certain, and Professor Walter S. Guiler of Miami University (Ohio) met in Betts's office in Shaker Heights, Ohio. (By that time Betts had left Iowa and taken a position as school psychologist and principal of Lomond School.) At this meeting the following purposes of the new organization were agreed upon:

1. To emphasize relationships among listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
2. To encourage research in graduate schools by delineating problems meriting investigation.

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*The term *chairman* has been retained in this history in instances when at the time it was customary to use it. Apparently *chair* rather than *chairman* began to be used about 1973. It is interesting to note, though, that from its founding NCRE evidenced little sexual discrimination. There have been twenty-five males holding the presidency and nineteen females. Nor have the secretaries all been female. Six females and five males have held this office.

3. To publish critiques of research and to disseminate findings relevant to the improvement of instruction in the language arts.
4. To plan and sponsor meetings to evaluate annual bulletins. These meetings were to be held in conjunction with meetings of other research groups. (The other research groups were primarily only one, the American Educational Research Association, AERA, which then met in conjunction with or on adjacent dates with meetings of the Department of Superintendence.)

Plans at this 1932 meeting included an agreement to keep membership small, "hopefully to a maximum of twenty persons who were *actively* doing and reporting research." Betts was appointed chairman of the Bulletin Planning Committee and Guiler chairman of the Bibliographical Committee. There was also agreement that Greene would prepare a research bulletin for presentation at the 1933 meeting in Minneapolis and that Betts would prepare bulletins for presentation in Cleveland in 1934 and in Atlantic City in 1935.

The NCRE (then known as the National Conference on Research in Elementary School English) founders stressed research and publication, but they also stressed informality as far as the new organization was concerned. The first president was Marion R. Trabue, and C. C. Certain was secretary-treasurer. No mention was made of dues or membership lists in the early days (prior to incorporation in Michigan in 1937) but members of the group included Angela M. Broening, B. R. Buckingham, Mildred A. Dawson, E. W. Dolch, Josephine MacLatchy, Maude McBroom, Robert C. Pooley, Paul McKee, Gerald A. Yoakam, W. W. Theisen, and Ethel Mabie Falk.

NCRE Becomes Established

NCRE was an established organization almost from the time of its founding. While there was not a flocking of people who taught English or who were concerned about its teaching seeking to become members (in fact, the intent of the organizers was to keep membership quite limited), its influence was quickly felt, and the reasons for its founding recognized. Walter Barnes, in his NCTE presidential address on November 30, 1933, stated that "the criticism that has been brought against the National Council . . . is just" and that "as a group we have done little to further research in our field."

Barnes was not alone in this opinion. One of the founders of NCTE, John M. Clapp, had in 1926 proposed that NCTE establish a bureau

of research. Clapp had support within the organization but not enough to overcome the financial problems involved and the reservations about his focus on utilitarian aspects of the English curriculum. Too, such other people in NCTE as Dora V. Smith—who joined NCRE shortly after its founding and who was president in 1940-1941—were actively interested in research. Early NCRE members who apparently were active in NCTE—at least they were speakers at meetings in the later 1920s and the early 1930s—included Maude McBroom, Mildred A. Dawson, Marion R. Trabue, William S. Gray, Robert C. Pooley, and Bess Goodykoontz. To these individuals and others, NCRE provided an outlet for their interest in English research.

Of course, another reason for the success of NCRE in becoming established so quickly was the prominence of the founders and other early members. People like Gray, Dawson, E. W. Dolch, Walter S. Guiler, J. Conrad Seegers, Trabue, and Greene had been writing frequently in *The Elementary English Review* and other journals prior to the founding of NCRE. Gray was president of the American Educational Research Association in 1933, as was Greene in 1936. Other members were also officers, editorial committee members, and writers in AERA publications. Another example of the prominence is that many of the members were active in the National Society for the Study of Education. Several had participated in the preparation of the 24th Yearbook of that society, *Report of the National Committee on Reading*. In the 36th Yearbook, *The Teaching of Reading: A Second Report*, the writers included Emmett A. Betts, Angela M. Broening, B. R. Buckingham, Edgar Dale, Dolch, Donald D. Durrell, Ethel Mabie Falk, Arthur Gates, Goodykoontz, Gray, Greene, Ernest Horn, Delia Kibbe, Lou LaBrant, Bernice E. Leary, Helen K. Mackintosh, Paul McKee, Pooley, Trabue, Gertrude Whipple, Paul Witty, and Gerald A. Yoakam. A further example is shown in the 1940 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Educational Research*, which had been planned since 1936. Clifford P. Archer, Dale, Dolch, Gray, Greene, and E. Horn were all authors of articles in that publication.

NCRE influence upon NCTE also attests to its rapid establishment. One way this was shown is that the third annual bulletin, *Reading Disabilities and Their Correction*, as well as the work that was in progress on the fourth bulletin, *Research Problems in Reading in the Elementary School*, was at least partially responsible for the inclusion of reading as a topic at the 1935 NCTE meeting. Attendance at that meeting jumped to 1300 from the 600 who had attended in 1934, a jump attributed largely to the attention given to reading. NCRE members, and the research they had done, also influenced *An*

Experience Curriculum in English, published by NCTE in 1935. This publication, presenting a pattern curriculum, was a product of the work of the NCTE Curriculum Commission, a work that had begun in 1929. McBroom and C. C. Certain were the only NCRE members on this commission, but other NCRE members—Broening, Mackintosh, E. Horn, McBroom, LaBrant, Gates, Willis Uhl, Certain, Kibbe, Greene, Guiler, and Pooley—were among those called upon to do the writing.

By 1937 active membership (meaning those who had paid their dues; this, even then, was a problem) had grown to thirty-one. Robert C. Pooley, then an assistant professor of English at the University of Wisconsin, was president in 1936–1937 and Maude McBroom, principal of the University of Iowa Elementary School, was president in 1937–1938. (The early records always show the terms of the officers as running from February to February.) Beginning apparently during Pooley's term, action was taken to incorporate the organization. The incorporation was in Michigan, with the Articles of Incorporation being signed on February 18, 1937. These Articles listed as "the first board of directors" Robert C. Pooley, C. C. Certain, B. R. Buckingham, Angela M. Broening, and Josephine MacLatchy. The word *Elementary* in the name, as the organization was incorporated and as it had been known since its founding, remained only a few months after incorporation. On May 24, 1937, Bessie Bacon Goodrich, Director of Curriculum Revision of the Des Moines Public Schools and at that time NCRE vice-president, and Certain signed an amendment to the Articles changing the name to the National Conference on Research in English. The amendment action was apparently the result of a vote taken at the breakfast session in New Orleans on February 22, 1937, and reflected the fact that a number of members were primarily interested in secondary school English and that others felt that concerns about English teaching and research should not be segmented.

In 1939 bylaw changes were proposed to define more specifically the duties of the Conference officers and to state more adequately the qualifications for active membership. These proposals were accepted, but the suggestion of Certain that active membership be extended to individuals only by unanimous vote of the members was not approved. Certain's concern was that only active researchers be permitted to benefit from NCRE activities. Certain pointed out that the Conference was earning money from its publications (Scott, Foresman and Company had recently advanced $500 on future royalties on the handbook published in 1939) and was particularly respected because of these publications and the NCRE members who authored them.

Early Programs

The first meeting of NCRE was the organizational "get-together" at the AERA/Department of Superintendence meeting in Washington in 1932. The second meeting in Minneapolis in 1933 largely consisted of a report on the first annual bulletin, *Research in Elementary Language: A Report of Problems and Progress.* This bulletin was written by Harry A. Greene and was based upon the research by Greene's students at the University of Iowa and his interpretation of their findings in terms of application in classrooms. The bulletin included critiques of Greene's report by E. J. Ashbaugh, Robert C. Pooley, Dora V. Smith, Percival M. Symonds, and Marion R. Trabue. The critiquers who were present also spoke at this meeting.

The meeting in Cleveland in February of 1934 was identified as the "Third Annual Meeting." The meeting consisted of two sessions—a breakfast and business meeting on February 24 and a luncheon on February 27. The breakfast session included these reports:

> "A Study of the Causes of Poor Sentence Structure in Written Composition" by Ethel Mabie [later Falk], Supervisor, Curriculum and Method, Public Schools, Madison, Wisconsin
>
> "The Genetic Development of Articulation in Children's Speech" by Irene Poole, University Elementary School, Ann Arbor, Michigan
>
> "Current Research in Elementary School English and Suggestions for the Third Annual Bulletin" by members of the Conference

C. C. Certain also reported, pointing out the desirability of extending membership of the Conference through associate membership but retaining the provision in the constitution that active membership could be obtained only through approval of the Executive Committee. He also stated that a subscription to *The Elementary English Review* was not included in the membership fee. The amount of the fee is not clear, but a subscription to the journal was $2.50. Certain suggested that possibly when the active membership reached 150 "a discount on the subscription price . . . could likely be made to members."

The "Luncheon and Research Report" session was at "12 o'clock and Early Afternoon," February 27. Greene, president from "February 1933 to February 1934," had presided at the breakfast meeting. F. H. Bair, Superintendent of the Shaker Heights City School District presided at the luncheon meeting. The printed program called for a presentation of the second annual bulletin, *A Critical Summary of Selective Research in Elementary School Composition, Language,*

and Grammar, by coauthors Walter S. Guiler and Emmett A. Betts and critical evaluations of it by Philip A. Boyer (Director, Educational Research, Board of Education, Philadelphia), William L. Connor (Chief, Bureau of Educational Research, Board of Education, Cleveland), Paul McKee (Colorado State Teachers College, Greeley), W. W. Theisen (Assistant Superintendent, Milwaukee Public Schools), and Gerald A. Yoakam (School of Education, University of Pittsburgh). The program did not work out as planned. Guiler, Theisen, Boyer, and McKee were not present. Greene substituted for Guiler and Trabue summarized the written evaluations of Theisen and Boyer. The program concluded with a discussion led by Bess Goodykoontz, Assistant Commissioner, U. S. Office of Education.

Meetings for the next five or six years followed the same general format. Breakfast meetings were usually from 8:30 to 11:30 and were held generally a day, sometimes two days, prior to the luncheon meeting. Luncheon meetings were regularly stated as being held at "noon and early afternoon." In 1939 there were two "open" luncheon meetings. (See Figure 1.) One of these largely focused on reading problems and the other on vocabulary (a report on the seventh annual bulletin). The luncheon meetings were more formal than the breakfast meetings because non-NCRE members could attend the luncheons and because the programs were more structured. The practice of holding some joint meetings was begun, although these were regarded as "extra" meetings. In 1939 there were separate joint meetings with the Department of Classroom Teachers (the topic was "Vitalizing and Promoting Growth in Reading on the Part of all Pupils") and the American Educational Research Association ("A Study of Certain Language Problems of Children in the Elementary Schools").

The bases of the luncheon programs were the annual bulletins. Bulletin titles and authors of the third through seventh bulletins were:

Reading Disabilities and Their Correction: A Critical Summary of Selective Research (1935), Emmett A. Betts

Research Problems in Reading in the Elementary School (1936), Donald D. Durrell

Principles of Method in Elementary English Composition (1937), Harry A. Greene

Elementary School Language Textbooks: A Survey of Their Use and a Summary of Related Research Studies (1938), Mildred A. Dawson

Vocabulary Problems in the Elementary School (1939), J. Conrad Seegers

Eighth Annual Meeting

of

The National Conference on Research in English

Cleveland, Ohio—February 25 to February 28, 1939

Saturday, February Twenty-fifth

Noon—12:30 o'clock, and early afternoon

Luncheon, 12:30 p. m.
Salle Moderne Room
Hotel Statler
Reservations in advance ($1.50); write the Conference Secretary*

Presiding: ANGELA M. BROENING, President; Department of Supervision and Research, Public Schools, Baltimore, Maryland.

A Plan for Investigation in Elementary English Language and Composition (20 minutes)—B. R. BUCKINGHAM, Chairman, Committee on Elementary School Language and Composition; Directing Editor, Elementary School Textbooks, Ginn and Company, Boston.

Reading in the Intermediate Grades (20 minutes) A Research Bulletin in preliminary form.
Presentation—WILLIS L. UHL, Chairman; Dean, College of Education, University of Washington, Seattle.
Discussion (10 minutes)—GERTRUDE WHIPPLE, College of Education, Wayne University, Detroit.

Fact-Burden as a Cause of Reading Difficulty (20 minutes)—E. W. DOLCH, College of Education, University of Illinois, Urbana.

Unpublished Studies in Elementary School English: Committee Report, 1938.
Presentation (20 minutes)—JOHN P. MILLIGAN, Chairman, Supervisor of Student Teaching, State Teachers College, Newark, N. J.
Discussion (15 minutes)—ROY IVAN JOHNSON, Stephens College, Columbia, Missouri; RICHARD A. FOSTER, Ohio University, Athens; KATHARINE L. MCLAUGHLIN, University of California at Los Angeles.

A Handbook of English for Boys and Girls, Grades 7 to 9: A Report.
Presentation (20 minutes)—ANGELA M. BROENING, Chairman.
Discussion (10 minutes)

Business: Announcements by the Conference Secretary.

Figure 1. NCRE Program for the February 1939 Annual Meeting.

Monday, February Twenty-seventh

Morning Meeting 9:15 o'clock } Joint Meeting with the Department of Classroom Teachers of the National Education Association
The Little Theatre, Cleveland Auditorium

Presiding: WILLIAM S. GRAY, Vice-President of The National Conference on Research in English; Department of Education, University of Chicago. Dr. Gray will lead the discussion at the close of the program.

Platform Guests: ANGELA M. BROENING, President of The National Conference; MYRTLE HOOPER DAHL, President, The Department of Classroom Teachers; and other officers of the two organizations.

A Panel Discussion on the General Topic: *Vitalizing and Promoting Growth in Reading on the Part of all the Pupils—*

9:20 *Through the Experience Curriculum*—HELEN HEFFERNAN, Elementary School Supervisor, State Department of Education, Sacramento, California (12 minutes).

9:34 *Through the Reading Program in the Kellogg School*, Portland, Oregon—DAISY NEWHOUSE, Classroom Teacher (12 minutes).

9:48 *Through Cultivation of the Reading Tastes of Children*—G. A. YOAKAM, Professor of Education and Director of Elementary Grades, University of Pittsburg, Pittsburg, Pa. (12 minutes).

10:02 *Through the Reading Program in the Nassau School*, East Orange, N. J.—C. DEWITT BONEY, Principal (12 minutes).

10:16 *Through the Reading Program in the Roosevelt School*, Detroit, Michigan—ESTHER SMEED, Classroom Teacher (12 minutes).

10:30 *Through the Reading of New Books*—HELEN FERRIS, Editor, Young Wings, Junior Literary Guild, New York City (12 minutes).

10:44 *Through the Reading Program in the Tuttle School*, Minneapolis, Minnesota—VELMA DENNY, Classroom Teacher (12 minutes).

10:58 *Through the Integrated Curriculum*—F. E. OBERHOLTZER, Superintendent of Public Schools and President of Houston University, Houston, Texas (12 minutes).

11:12-11:45 Discussion from the floor led by the Chairman.

Announcements.

Tuesday, February Twenty-eighth

Morning Meeting 9:15 o'clock } Joint Meeting with the American Educational Research Association
Clubroom "B", Public Auditorium

Presiding: BESS GOODYKOONTZ, Vice-President, American Educational Research Association; Assistant United States Commissioner of Education, Washington.

A Study of Certain Language Problems of Children in the Elementary Schools.

9:20 *Social Demands of English: Evaluation of Proposed Research*—DORA V. SMITH, School of Education, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis (20 minutes).

9:42 *More Obvious Social Needs for English Expression*—WILLIAM L. CONNER, Superintendent of Schools, Allentown, Pennsylvania (20 minutes).

10:04 *Social Problems Complicating the Language of Children*—LOU L. LABRANT, Ohio State University, Columbus (20 minutes).

10:26 *Language and Emotional Development*—DANIEL A. PRESCOTT, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N. J. (20 minutes).

10:48-11:30 Discussion from floor led by chairman.

Announcements.

Tuesday, February Twenty-eighth

Noon — 12:00 o'clock, and early afternoon

Luncheon—12:00
Euclid Ball Room
Hotel Statler
Reservations in advance ($1.50); write the Conference Secretary*. Tickets on sale until 10:00 a. m., Tuesday, at the Ticket Booth of The American Association of School Administrators. To insure a seat, buy early! No tickets sold at the door.

Presiding: ANGELA M. BROENING, President.

Vocabulary Problems in the Elementary Schools: The Seventh Annual Research Bulletin.
Presentation (20 minutes)—J. C. SEEGERS, Chairman, Temple University, Philadelphia.

Critiques (20 minutes each)
W. S. GRAY, Department of Education, University of Chicago.
ERNEST HORN, School of Education, University of Iowa.
THOMAS A. KNOTT, University of Michigan.
EDWARD LEE THORNDIKE, Teachers College, Columbia, University.

Business: Announcements by the Conference Secretary.

Officers of the Conference, 1933

President: ANGELA M. BROENING, Department of Supervision and Research, Public Schools, Baltimore, Maryland.

Vice-President: WILLIAM S. GRAY, Professor of Education, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois.

**Secretary-Treasurer:* C. C. CERTAIN, Box 67, North End Station, Detroit, Michigan. Convention Address: Hotel Statler.

Executive Committee: Officers of The Conference, and BESS GOODYKOONTZ, Assistant Commissioner of Education, U. S. Office of Education, Washington, D. C.; MAUDE MCBROOM, Principal, University Elementary School, School of Education, The State University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa; ROBERT C. POOLEY, Associate Professor of English, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.

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The bulletins were distributed at the luncheon meetings and presented in some detail by their authors. A regular part of each of these programs was a critical evaluation, also printed in the bulletins, prepared by usually two or three persons. McKee, Guiler, Boyer, and Theisen critiqued the third annual bulletin; Arthur Gates, Durrell, and William S. Gray the fourth; Gates, Gray, and McKee the fifth; Trabue, Herbert Bruner, Falk, Fannie Ragland, and Clare M. Young the sixth. Gray critiqued the 1939 bulletin by Seegers.

The early bulletins were an outgrowth of expressions of concern by NCRE members. The second annual research bulletin listed seventy-three problems needing to be researched. The importance of this bulletin at the time is shown in a review of it in the October 1934 issue of *The Elementary School Journal*. The review stated that the bulletin "gives a most valuable list of deficiencies revealed in present research in elementary school language." From the list in that bulletin the Committee on Evaluation of Research at the 1935 meeting presented a report, to which many members of the organization contributed, of problems most needing attention. This report was the basis for selecting topics for bulletins and members of the committees to prepare them.

Much of the content of these early bulletins has, of course, become outdated. Research has been done on many of the problems these bulletins identified, and the bulletins provided much of the impetus for this later research. Still not all has been done; in virtually every bulletin there are sections that might have been written today. Greene, writing in the fifth bulletin, said "English teaching has been criticized, perhaps justly, because it appeared to place too much emphasis on the remedial and corrective aspects of expression and too little on the development of constructive expressional abilities." We would likely say it a bit differently today, but it is surely still true. Then there was this statement by Dora V. Smith in the 1941 bulletin:

> I would urge, then, as a result of my experiences in the New York Regents' Inquiry, that we recognize as basic to any language program the development of a rich and meaningful classroom environment which will make expression both natural and inevitable. . . .

In addition to the bulletins, several bibliographies of unpublished studies in elementary school English were published as committee reports. The first two were chaired by Josephine MacLatchy of Ohio State (reporting in 1936 on studies done between 1925 and 1934) and Bess Goodykoontz (updating and reporting in 1937). These were reported on at the meetings, usually at the breakfast sessions.

The flavor of the early meetings is shown in the following quotation from the minutes of the 1935 meeting:

> The Fourth Annual Meeting of the National Conference on Research in Elementary School English was held in Atlantic City, February 23–February 26, 1935. In the absence of the President, Dr. W. S. Guiler, the Vice President, Dr. Warren W. Coxe, presided. About twenty members of The Conference were present at the meeting in the Blue Room of the Ritz-Carleton Hotel at the breakfast, Saturday, February 23.
>
> Miss Ethel Mabie [Falk] presented the report of the Committee on Evaluation of Research Problems in Elementary Composition, Language, and Grammar. Discussion of her report was led by Dr. M. R. Trabue. It was the consensus of members of the Committee that more time was needed for a satisfactory evaluation of the research problems selected for study. Motion was passed calling upon the chairman, Miss Ethel Mabie, to make definite recommendations at the Tuesday meeting for final disposition of the Report. However, the report in preliminary form was accepted for publication in *The Elementary English Review*.
>
> In the absence of Miss Josephine MacLatchy, Dr. Emmett A. Betts read to The Conference the report of the Committee on Unpublished Research, which Miss MacLatchy, the chairman, had mailed to the secretary. The report consisted of a digest of outstanding current research manuscripts. Eighty-eight theses had been summarized in this report. With the exception of a dozen, or so, from the University of Iowa, the theses were examined and summarized in the office of the Editor, Division Bureau of Educational Research, Ohio State University. Dr. Betts pointed out that twenty-nine of these theses had already been reported by The Conference Committee on Selective Research in Elementary School Composition, Language, and Grammar, leaving a total of fifty-four. . . . A careful check had been made to be sure that the theses had not been published: first, the titles of doctors' theses were checked against the "List of American Doctorial Dissertations" published annually by the Library of Congress; second, titles of all others were checked against the Education Index and the Psychological Index.
>
> Summaries of the most significant and valuable of these studies will be published in *The Elementary English Review*. The Conference requested that the standard format used in the preparation of the Second Annual Bulletin, A Critical Summary of Selective Research in Composition, Language, and Grammar, be followed in preparing these *summaries* for publication. There were critical comments upon the report by Angela Broening, Supervision and Research, Baltimore Public Schools; Bess Goodykoontz, Assistant Commissioner of Education, National Office of Education, Washington, D. C. and by Dr. E. A. Betts, Superintendent of Practice, State Normal School, Oswego, New York.

The early meetings of NCRE were informal—more so perhaps than the quotation from the minutes indicates—with a good deal of fellowship and a focus always on research. Ethel Mabie Falk, the only NCRE member to hold the office of president for three years, said in 1978 in recalling the early meetings, "My most vivid memories are of the very frank, exhilarating discussions that characterized the breakfast sessions when we each presented our research problems and plans. Adverse comments were never withheld when thorough, honest research was in question, but suggestions were invariably given in a kindly and encouraging manner. Even in the larger groups at the Wednesday noon luncheons, the discussions that followed the main speech were pointed and provocative." Falk added: "I hope such vitality and warmth continue to be characteristic of Conference sessions."

The Role of C. C. Certain

The secretary-treasurer of NCRE from its founding to his death in December of 1940 was C. C. Certain. In many ways Certain was NCRE during those years, a fact partially due to the publication of the bulletins as articles in *The Elementary English Review*, which Certain had founded in 1924, but also because he made most of the arrangements for early NCRE meetings and, of course, collected dues and kept the minimal records needed. Beyond these things, though, some members recognized that he did more than might have been expected of a secretary-treasurer and referred to him as "the moving spirit behind NCRE." J. N. Hook in *A Long Way Together: A Personal View of NCTE's First Sixty-Seven Years* refers to "C. C. Certain's National Conference on Research in English."

Certain had been active in the National Council of Teachers of English almost from its beginning in 1911. He was the Council's treasurer from 1914 to 1916. He was also speaker at many NCTE meetings, was on numerous committees, and was a member of the Board of Directors. However, he became something of "a thorn in the side" of the NCTE Board and Executive Committee because he thought that the organization was not giving enough attention to elementary schools. He was ambitious and early in NCTE history had proposed to W. Wilbur Hatfield, NCTE executive secretary, that NCTE found an elementary magazine similar to *The English Journal*, founded by Hatfield in 1912. Hatfield's rejection of this proposal (although he suggested that Certain go ahead on his own) compounded the antagonism between them that had largely developed

because of Hatfield's tight rein on funds that Certain felt were due NCTE's Committee on Elementary English. Hatfield, in an interview with Robert S. Fay before Hatfield's death in 1976, admitted to a degree of truth in Certain's complaint but said that it was not an intentional slighting of Certain. Hatfield, writing in the October 1954 issue of *Elementary English*, stated that in the early days *The English Journal* "tried to serve all levels [but] usually carried in each issue one article for elementary teachers and one for college men" and that he and others felt the thin coverage to be unsatisfactory.

Hatfield described Certain as an "explosive sort of person" and attributed much of his disagreements over the years with Certain as due to the absence of articles of "a practical nature" in *The Elementary English Review*. The validity of Hatfield's viewpoint depends on one's definition of "practical." The writing of Certain himself in issues of that journal during his editorship clearly showed his interest in and knowledge of young children and their teachers. He regularly wrote a "For the Children" column that showed this knowledge. He wrote about children's literature and was particularly interested in the writers of it.

Hook, in discussing NCTE journals, reflects Hatfield's viewpoint, stating:

> In 1932, Certain founded a small select group concerned with the elementary schools, the National Conference on Research in English, and he tended to tailor the contents of his magazine to its preferences. Hence the magazine was less directly useful and less popular than it ideally should have been. As a result, the Council's influence in the elementary schools was not what it might have been.

Examination of early issues of *The Review* by this author resulted in some disagreement with Hatfield and Hook as to the usefulness of *The Elementary English Review*. It is probably true that after the founding of NCRE Certain included more reports about research in the journal than there had been in the first half dozen years of the journal's existence, but Certain's knowledge of and interest in children's literature meant that this area of an elementary school teacher's concerns received attention. There was also considerable attention to curriculum issues and to such "practical" things as choral speaking selections, plays, and activities for integrating language activities with other aspects of elementary school programs. In many ways *The Review* more closely resembled (except for the advertisements) such "popular" magazines of today as *Instructor* than has the journal since its name was changed.

Hook's comment that the readers of *The Review* were largely "elementary school supervisors and normal school professors" is probably also true. Perhaps the same could be said today, unfortunately, about the leadership of genuinely professional journals.

Fueling the antagonism between Hatfield and Certain were such minor things as Hatfield's probably unintentional referring to NCRE as NCRIE or NCORIE. Too, there was Certain's perception that NCTE was almost exclusively interested in secondary school English. Following the NCTE Board of Directors' twenty-sixth anniversary meeting, Certain wrote, "Those present who had any interest in elementary school . . . English left [the meeting] with the distinct feeling that the close of the next quarter of a century will find the National Council of Teachers of English doing business at the same old stand, namely the secondary school." Any slighting of the elementary school seemed to fire up Certain's explosiveness.

Some members of NCRE resented Certain's influence on the Conference and the role he had assumed. One prominent early member resigned from NCRE only a few years after its founding because "the organization was being run by one man, who no longer was willing to consult with the administrative officers." Yet, by and large, Certain was respected and certainly tenaciously held NCRE to the stated objective of doing and reporting research. With the election of secretary-treasurers after his death, as with the other officers, this objective was sometimes held to with something less than devotion. Another testament to Certain's devotion is the fact that while bulletins were published yearly during the first years of the Conference, after his death in 1940 none were published between 1941 and 1949.

A Handbook of English for Boys and Girls

The only hardback publication of NCRE is the *Handbook of English for Boys and Girls,* published by Scott, Foresman and Company in 1939. This 128-page handbook was prepared by a committee of NCRE headed by Robert C. Pooley and including Delia Kibbe and Lou LaBrant. The book was edited by C. C. Certain.

The book was an outgrowth of discussions in early Conference meetings about the need for children to have a source that they could turn to for help in speech and writing situations. The concerned Conference members felt that at least some textbooks of the day gave too little attention to the aspects of writing and speaking that particularly have direct social utility. Thus the contents of the handbook

focus on giving reports and announcements; telling stories; outlining a talk or report; writing stories, poems, plays, reports, and letters; and reminding readers of social amenities. There are also chapters on improving handwriting and spelling, using a dictionary, using punctuation and capitalization correctly, and avoiding nonstandard words. It was intended for children in grades four to six.

The introductory section tells how the book is to be used:

> This *Handbook* is really a "handy" book of information about correct ways to speak and write. You can turn to it for help whenever you have some special trouble in speaking or writing. You will find suggestions about letter writing, using the telephone, making introductions, writing reports and plays; and many other things you may need to know.

In the remaining part of the introduction, particular attention is given to using the index of the book for locating the help that the student needs.

First mention of the handbook in NCRE meeting programs occurred in 1935. The program listed a "Tentative Report by the Committee on Criteria for a Manual of Style for Elementary School Teachers of English" by Pooley. Pooley also reported at the 1936 meeting; the program listed the book title as "A Handbook of English Usage: A Manual of Style for Elementary School Teachers of English," and in smaller print was "Report to be presented tentatively in the form of a specimen handbook—Grades 1 to 8 inclusive."

Neither meeting programs nor meeting minutes are available for the years 1937 and 1938, but apparently the idea of a handbook suitable for all grades was dropped. LaBrant, in a 1976 letter, stated:

> About 1938 Robert Pooley, a Miss Kibbe (whom I never met), and I were asked to write copy for a little book—*A Handbook of English for Boys and Girls*, published in 1939 by Scott, Foresman. The three writers received only a token share of the royalties (just to make the contract legitimate) and the rest went to NCRE for conference expenses.

Apparently, though, the idea of a handbook for students of other than the middle grades was not dropped right away. The 1939 program included a report by Angela M. Broening, chairman of a committee reporting on a similar handbook for students in grades 7 to 9. What happened to plans for this handbook is not clear. Since it was never published, possibly there were second thoughts about how it would be different from the handbook that was then being published. Also, the engagement of NCRE members in various events preceding and during World War II undoubtedly curtailed the plans.

Sales of the handbook were not overwhelming, and probably books were purchased primarily by teachers and libraries rather than as sets for classrooms. The first year sales were about 26,000 copies. After that there was a drop-off in sales each year until 1946, when again nearly 26,000 were sold. Sales continued—usually only a few hundred or fewer—until the early 1960s. Sales of the handbook totaled about 115,000. (A 1950 letter from Scott, Foresman and Company stated that 192,275 copies of the book had been printed; royalty reports indicate that many copies were given away.) Royalties of 4 percent of receipts over the years amounted to slightly over $2,000.

There was some discussion around 1950 about revising the handbook. This idea was dropped, probably due in part to the drop in sales, which some NCRE members attributed to the discontinuance of advertising by Scott, Foresman. This lack of advertising was probably due to the fact that the publisher had started issuing an elementary school language series after the first NCRE handbook was published.

The finale of the handbook project occurred in 1973. An officer of Scott, Foresman wrote that since there had been no "royalty earnings for the past three years" and no inventory of books, the company "would like to offer you the lump sum of $5.00 for the purchase of your future royalty rights under the agreements." At the suggestion of then-president Richard Hodges, Roy A. Kress, secretary-treasurer, duly signed the release.

The Elementary English Review and Controversy

As mentioned previously, *The Elementary English Review* was established by C. C. Certain in 1924 because he felt that *The English Journal* gave little attention to elementary school English (which W. Wilbur Hatfield later admitted was true) and because NCTE had rejected his proposal to establish a journal for that purpose. But Hatfield did officially welcome the new magazine in a 1924 issue of *The English Journal:*

> *The English Journal* wishes to celebrate the arrival of a baby in the family—*The Elementary English Review*, a monthly magazine of about forty pages, devoted exclusively to English in the elementary school.

Julia L. Certain, the widow of C. C. Certain, writing in the October 1954 issue of *Elementary English*, provided insight into the establishment of *The Review:*

> Whether or not the teachers of the 1920s recognized it, they were helping establish an idea new in education—a conviction of the great importance of childhood, and an enthusiasm for understanding and teaching young children. This belief found expression in many ways. There were teachers like Marietta Johnson at Fairhope and Lucy Sprague Mitchell at the City and Country School. There were leaders like William H. Kilpatrick at Columbia, R. L. Lyman at the University of Chicago, Florence Bamberger at Johns Hopkins, and Sterling A. Leonard at the University of Wisconsin. There were books like Rugg's *The Child-Centered School*. There was the Progressive Education Association, founded in 1919. And there was the sudden opulence of books for children that followed the establishment by the Macmillan Company in 1919 of the first separate children's book department; the founding of Children's Book Week in the same year; and the institution of the Newbery Award by Frederick G. Melcher in 1922.
>
> It is not hard to recreate the excitement and hopefulness of that period, for even now, a depression and two wars later, it has not abated.
>
> It was in the spirit of those times that C. C. Certain, then Supervisor of School Libraries in Detroit, established *The Elementary English Review*, and published the first issue in March 1924.

The relationship of *The Elementary English Review* to the National Council of Teachers of English was at first an informal one. According to J. N. Hook, this was "at first because the officers were not sure whether there would be enough demand for an English magazine on the elementary school level, and later because concrete terms proved to be difficult to work out with Certain." However, Hatfield, in an editorial comment in *The English Journal* in 1929, stated that "acting under authority of the Board of Directors . . . the Executive Committee . . . has just accepted *The Elementary English Review* as a second official organ." Following this *The Review* was distributed to Council members as a part of their membership fees. Its operation within the Council was not always a smooth one, however; Certain and Hatfield often clashed about such things as whether an article directed particularly at teachers of the seventh and eighth grades should be in *The English Journal* or in *The Review*.

After the founding of NCRE, and particularly because of Certain's role in that event, *The Review* came to be regarded by NCRE members as the official journal of NCRE, and some NCTE members were unaware of its ties to NCTE. In fact, Lou LaBrant, writing to Dora V. Smith (both were members of both organizations) after the death of Certain, said, "I think *The Review* had considerable character of its own which ought to be preserved. I do think, however, that the Council must shortly develop its elementary field. Perhaps it could accept

this other magazine as official." Marion R. Trabue wrote to Mrs. Certain: "I feel quite sure that most of the members of the Conference have assumed that *The Review* was the official organ of the Conference." Actually, though, no formal arrangements had ever been made between Certain and NCRE other than an agreement that the members received a 20 percent discount on the subscription price and Certain received a royalty fee of 10 percent for editing the bulletins and handling their sales. Apparently those arrangements had been formalized by contracts in 1937 between Certain and NCRE.

Following Certain's death, considerable disagreement developed between the Conference and Mrs. Certain. Mrs. Certain had been identified for a number of years as associate editor of *The Review* and apparently felt that she should continue the role of her husband in relation to NCRE. However, NCRE, seeking to distribute among the officers the duties that Certain had assumed, established a committee to formulate policy for subsequent publication and editorial work. The disagreement soon accelerated when Mrs. Certain wrote to J. Conrad Seegers (who had been selected secretary-treasurer after Certain's death), quoting the opinion of her lawyer that NCRE did not have the right to cancel the contracts. Trabue replied to the effect that the contracts were intended to protect Certain's interests in the publications that he had edited, but they did not apply to future publications. A lawyer friend of Dora V. Smith advised that "there is no possibility that the personal services required in a contract with the deceased could be interpreted as transferrable to his estate."

The matter dragged on through 1941 and most of 1942. Aside from the somewhat hasty securing of legal opinions, there was a genuine attempt to work out an arrangement between Mrs. Certain and NCRE. The issue boiled down to whether NCRE would recognize *The Elementary English Review* as its official organ. Mrs. Certain wanted that, but she also wanted to keep control of *The Review*. NCRE was willing to designate *The Review* as the official organ but held that "it must serve certain purposes of the association [NCRE] which require that the association have certain control over the material published." A designation of *The Review* as the NCRE official organ might have been embarrassing (as no one seemed to note) since it had already been designated as an official organ of NCTE.

The issue was fortunately resolved in late 1942 by the purchase of *The Review* by NCTE. The price was $2,250, and the journal was renamed *Elementary English* with John J. DeBoer as editor. DeBoer immediately solicited manuscripts from NCRE. He later became a member and served as president of NCRE in 1951–1952.

2 The 1940s

The death of secretary-treasurer C. C. Certain in 1940 was a blow to the operation of NCRE. Fortunately, the president that year was Dora V. Smith, and Mildred A. Dawson was vice-president. Both were strong researchers, authors of bulletins, and regular members at NCRE meetings almost from the organization's founding. J. Conrad Seegers, an equally strong NCRE member, was persuaded to become secretary-treasurer. However, Seegers accepted this duty on the condition that he would only keep records and handle the organization's funds. Thus, a major concern in 1941 was the distribution of other duties that had largely been done by Certain. Essentially, it was decided that the president would be in charge of planning programs, appointing committees, and projecting the research program (Certain had done much "pushing" of bulletin authors and critique writers) and that the vice-president would be in charge of accepting new members, approving publications, and dealing with Julia Certain when she took over as owner and editor of *The Elementary English Review*.

Another problem facing the organization was the publication of the bulletins. While their contents had from the beginning been published as articles in *The Review*, the first seven bulletins had been published, advertised, and sold by Scott, Foresman and Company. However, the contract with that company had lapsed. A particular problem was the *Handbook of English for Boys and Girls* since Scott, Foresman was bringing out its own elementary school language series. The publisher was also aware that NCRE had proposed a handbook for grades one to three and that a committee had been actively working on a handbook for grades seven and eight. In fact, Angela M. Broening and Mata V. Bear were working on the manuscript for the seventh- and eighth-grade handbook. Stan Hyer had been appointed to head a committee for the first- to third-grade handbook, but the committee had not started its work yet. Apparently, Scott, Foresman declined to publish these two handbooks and proposed that it have the power to veto NCRE publishing projects in the future. This proposal was rejected, but a decision about publishing bulletins was delayed (partially due to World War II) until later in the decade, and the publication of the other handbooks was never revived.

The bulletin *Evaluating Instruction in the Elementary Schools of New York*, prepared by Dora V. Smith, was ready for publication. It was published by Scott, Foresman, as was *Reading in the Intermediate Grades* since the contracts had already been signed. Smith, writing to Dawson in January of 1941, stated that her bulletin was "promised for distribution at Atlantic City." The reading bulletin was delayed (until late 1941) because Gertrude Whipple had taken over as chairman upon the death of Willis Uhl, who had begun the bulletin. These bulletins were discussed at the 1941 meeting, as was the attempt of the Committee on Composition to secure funding from the Carnegie Corporation for a study of the use of elementary school English textbooks. That effort had been unsuccessful, so consideration was given to other means for conducting the study.

Programs were sometimes extended to more than the breakfast and luncheon sessions. The meeting program reproduced in Figure 2 indicates that two joint sessions were held in addition to two luncheon meetings. The printed program did not indicate, however, the breakfast meeting that was held on Sunday morning to conduct the business of the Conference.

This meeting was the last of the annual meetings until 1947, and other activities were restricted as well. The February 1942 meeting had been planned before the war broke out, but after that the Executive Committee endeavored to conduct all necessary business by mail until regular meetings were resumed. One action was to ask the officers elected for 1942–1943 to continue an extra year in office. Thus, E. W. Dolch of the University of Illinois was president for the 1942–43 and 1943–44 terms. In a letter to the membership in late 1943 he wrote:

> Your Executive Committee has decided that the Conference should comply with the request made December 15th by Mr. Joseph Eastman, National Coordinator of Transportation, that all conventions, not directly concerned with the war effort, be cancelled.
>
> We are therefore cancelling all arrangements for a meeting at St. Louis February 27th. Those who were to be on the program will send their papers to *The Elementary English Review* for publication and you can read them there.

Dolch went on to say that no dues would be assessed for the coming year and that thereafter they would be $1.00 for associate members and $2.00 for active members. (Dues had been $1.50 and $2.50 prior to 1939, and then raised to $2.00 and $3.00.)

Plans had been made for the 1943 meeting in St. Louis, and those who were to speak were contacted and asked to send their papers to John J. DeBoer, the editor of *Elementary English*. Among those

Eleventh Annual Meeting

of

The National Conference on Research in English

San Francisco, California-February 21 to 24, 1942

Saturday, February Twenty-first

Noon—12.00 o'clock and early afternoon — Luncheon, 12.00; Jade Room, Bellevue Hotel; Tickets at door ($1.30)

Note: Owing to the nature of this program, it will be impossible to accommodate auditors arriving after the luncheon. Therefore those desiring to hear the program and to take part in the discussion are requested to attend the luncheon also.

Presiding: Dr. E. W. Dolch, College of Education, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois.

Report: *Developing Children's Awareness of Complex Language Meanings: A Report on the Stanford Language Arts Investigation*—Dr. Holland Roberts, School of Education, Stanford University, California.

Discussion: Dr. Frank N. Freeman, Dean, School of Education, University of California, Berkeley, California.

Dr. Alfred S. Lewerenz, Supervisor of Educational Research and Guidance, Los Angeles, California.

Monday, February Twenty-third

Morning Meeting 9.15 o'clock — Auditorium of the Veterans' Building

(This meeting will be held jointly with the California Association of English Teachers)

Presiding: George E. Murphy, President, California State Association of English Teachers, Humboldt State College, Arcata, California.

Report: *Developing Pupils' Ability to Attack Their Reading Vocabulary Independently*—Dr. Nila B. Smith.

Report: *The Challenge of Speech to the Classroom Teacher*—Dr. Louise Abney.

Report: *Creative Instruction in the Language Arts*—Dr. Jessie Duboc.

Figure 2. NCRE Program for the February 1942 Annual Meeting.

Tuesday, February Twenty-fourth

Morning Meeting
9.15 o'clock — Auditorium of the Veterans' Building

(This meeting will be held jointly with the California Association of English Teachers)

Presiding: Dr. E. W. Dolch, College of Education, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois.

General Topic: *Remedial Procedures in the Language Field.*

Report: *Reading Adjustment in a Large City System*—Dr. Grace Munson, Bureau of Child Study, Board of Education, Chicago, Illinois.

Report: *Status and Trends in Remedial Work in California*—Dr. John A. Hockett, University of California, Los Angeles.

Report: *Corrective Work in Language Teaching*—Dr. Laura Hooper, Director of Elementary Education, Newtonville, Massachusetts.

Report: *Trends in Remedial Reading*—Dr. William S. Gray, Professor of Education, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois.

Discusson

Noon—12.00 o'clock — Luncheon, Humboldt Hall, Empire Hotel ($1.30)

Presiding: Dr. E. W. Dolch, College of Education, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois.

Report: *Unpublished Research*—Dr. J. Paul Leonard, Stanford University, California.

Report: *Differentiation in Language Arts*—Dr. Angela M. Broening, Baltimore Public Schools, Baltimore, Maryland.

Report: *Preventive Instruction in Language Arts*—Dr. E. A. Betts, Pennsylvania State College, State College, Pennsylvania.

Officers of the Conference, 1941

President: Mildred A. Dawson, Profesor of Education, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee.

Vice-President: E. W. Dolch, College of Education, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois.

Secretary-Treasurer: J. Conrad Seegers, Teachers College, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Executive Committee: Officers of The Conference, Dora V. Smith, Professor of Education, College of Education, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, and Dean M. R. Trabue, School of Education, Pennsylvania State College, State College, Pennsylvania.

Proceedings and official papers published in
The Elementary English Review
Box 67, North End Station Detroit, Michigan

scheduled for the program were Dora V. Smith, L. J. O'Rourke, James A. Fitzgerald, Gertrude Whipple, and Wilhelmina Hill. Among the topics were "Grammar in a Modern Language Program" (Smith), "Errors Made by Children in Letter Writing" (Fitzgerald), and "Interest Value of Illustrations" (Whipple).

The Executive Committee endeavored to continue the publishing of bulletins, or at least to plan for them. Nothing was settled, however, because it was difficult to exchange ideas through the mail and because an agreement had not yet been worked out with NCTE for publishing bulletins. Interestingly, considerable attention was given to a new type of bulletin, one which would propose new research, suggest approaches to it, and seek cooperation of NCRE members in conducting it. A follow-up bulletin would then be published reporting the findings of the studies. Unfortunately this idea was not followed through, although the Cooperative First Grade Studies of later years resembles it.

NCTE had canceled its 1942 and 1943 meetings but decided to meet in Columbus, Ohio, in 1944. At this meeting, one session was identified as an NCRE meeting. Dora V. Smith spoke on "Research in Language Related to Child Development," Marion R. Trabue on "Some Challenges to Those Planning Research," and William S. Gray on "A Summary of Research on Reading." Again in 1945 there was an NCRE session at the NCTE meeting in Minneapolis. The speakers were Paul A. Witty, whose topic was "What Does Research Say about Abilities to Speak and Write?" and J. Conrad Seegers, who spoke on "What Does Research Say about Reading?"

There was no NCRE session at the 1946 NCTE meeting, although many NCRE members were on the program. NCRE meetings resumed in 1947 at Atlantic City, having been planned primarily by Ethel Mabie Falk, who had been elected president for the 1944–1945 year and asked by the Executive Committee to continue for the next two years. In recalling this 1947 meeting some thirty years later, Falk said, "The breakfast meeting in 1947 was a reunion of researchers delighted to get back to their studies. The noon luncheon, at which Rudolph Flesch of *Why Johnny Can't Read* was the speaker, drew a large crowd of intensely interested (and some disagreeing) listeners."

Actually, Flesch's topic was "A Readability Formula in Practice," and other speakers were Emmett A. Betts and William S. Gray. Betts's topic was "Readability: Its Application to the Elementary School" and Gray's was "The Progress and Present Status of Research on Readability." Margaret Hampel also reported on the progress of her unpublished research study.

At the breakfast business meeting a resolution was passed authorizing the Executive Committee "to continue negotiations and conversations with the National Council of Teachers of English with reference to closer application." Consideration was also given to ways in which the Conference could assist NCTE's Curriculum Commission. Other than these matters, the breakfast session was devoted to reports of research, and much "catching up" was done, as shown by this excerpt from the minutes:

> Dr. Yoakam reported a series of studies dealing with readability. Some of these studies proposed a digest and interpretation of previous research on this topic. He also reported some study of the vocabulary of slow-learning children and of underprivileged children.
>
> Dr. Dawson reported efforts to coordinate the work of people who are studying the language development of children. This is being done in connection with a National Council committee.
>
> Dr. Greene reported some studies on methods and some on patterns of speech and language and also certain studies on the relative methods of a direct as opposed to a formal approach. Dr. Greene also raised a question as to whether the *Encyclopedia of Educational Research* does care adequately for summaries of research. If it does not, he said he would like suggestions from the Conference as to improvement. If it does, he suggested that it might make summarizing bulletins by the Conference unnecessary. It was pointed out, however, that the Encyclopedia articles were necessarily more condensed and consequently might not serve the needs of teachers as adequately.
>
> Dr. Philip Falk reported studies in the Madison schools dealing with spelling, with particular reference to retention, learning difficulties, and individual differences.
>
> Dr. Whipple reported on studies of informational reading and particularly on studies of children's concepts. One study, taking the single word "latitude," discovered that children in Detroit, St. Louis and Los Angeles, in grades four to eight all experienced difficulty in understanding this term.
>
> Miss Whipple also reported studies of children's interest in books, of readability, of studies of pictures, as approaches to be employed in selecting school books.
>
> Dr. Gunn spoke of an analysis of elementary school studies of imagery to determine whether or not these findings can be applied to the secondary school.
>
> Dr. Nila Banton Smith reported some summaries of research and controlled study to determine whether in initial reading words should be presented in lists or in context. Findings indicated that the latter procedure was superior. She is also initiating a study to discover the most crucial weaknesses in grades seven and eight.
>
> Dr. Seegers reported several studies dealing with spelling, particularly the effectiveness of an inductive as contrasted with a

deductive method; and others dealing with the words used by children. The latter studied the extent to which words not in the spelling list were found in the writing of children who had been taught by means of a list.

Following the 1947 meeting there was renewed effort toward publishing bulletins again. Emmett A. Betts suggested that since NCRE members had contacts with the *Educational Administration and Supervision, Journal of Educational Research, Journal of Experimental Education,* and other journals, as well as *Elementary English,* "we could have these bulletins published as a series of articles and obtain reprints at a cost of about thirty-five dollars per thousand." Betts also suggested that bulletins were needed on writing, spelling, speech, and listening. No conclusions were reached in the correspondence exchange, nor at the 1948 meeting, except that Edgar Dale's bulletin on readability was to be published in *Elementary English.*

At the 1948 meeting, again in Atlantic City, the luncheon session was addressed by Dora V. Smith ("General Trends in Communication"), Nila B. Smith ("Personal and Social Values in Reading"), and Harry A. Greene ("New Directions in Evaluation of Language Arts").

At the breakfast session needed research was discussed. These suggestions were made (quoted as reported to members):

1. The future program in poetry for the grades.
   The relation between training in rhythms and elementary school reading.
2. Language growth and personality development of young children.
   Descriptions of democratic participation in planning learning and related growth.
   Vividness as a factor in learning through participation in community activities.
   Study with films. Reconstruction of environment to meet learning needs.
   Personality change, growth in learning derived from the lunch period.
   Children's conversation in wartime nursery schools. Its content and attitudes disclosed.
   Relative language growth in group living in nursery schools and in smaller family units in the home.
   Learning opportunities in language growth in summer.
3. Developmental problems involved in promoting growth in interpretation in what is read.
   Detailed studies of the steps and processes involved in perceiving and recognizing words.

Nature of the reading material of greatest educational and cultural value to children of different levels of advancement.

4. The relation between the student's command of handwriting and the fluency of his expression.
5. More investigations should be made to ascertain actual language needs and the extent to which these are being met in our schools throughout the country. Particularly do we need this in Texas.
6. How to improve methods for the teaching of spelling.
7. Effect of comics on children's taste in line, form, color.
   Effect of "Big Little Books" upon children's tastes in reading.
8. To what extent does the study of formal grammar actually improve the use of English?

Also during the business meeting in 1948 was a discussion about the "disposal of the bulletins now in the secretary's possession," a problem created by the earlier disassociation with Scott, Foresman and Company. Mildred A. Dawson, who was then secretary-treasurer, had authorized the publisher to destrov some of their copies of the earlier bulletins. Others had been sent to her, and she had found the task of filling orders—usually single copies—to be a considerable burden.

There was a good deal of reporting and discussing of members' research at the 1949 business meeting, as shown by this excerpt from the minutes:

> Miss Kerwin reported for Dr. Whipple on her current research, "Classroom Experiences in the Language Arts." 150 students in the language education department at Wayne University are currently coordinating their practical work in the classroom with courses offered in language arts at Wayne University by Dr. Whipple and four assistants. Since the research project is now underway, results cannot be noted yet. Members of the Conference received copies of the material that the students were using.
>
> Dr. Nila Banton Smith reported that she is working on research on the difficulty of learning abstract words such as which, this, these, then, there. Among the other problems that she is currently studying are:
>
> 1. Whether there is more difficulty in learning to read among younger children in a family than among older siblings and only children.
> 2. Studying methods to use for cases with cerebral palsy and aphasia.
>
> Dr. Murphy of Boston is doing research on the number of words children can get and retain in a day.
>
> Dr. Dawson discussed briefly research under consideration to suit curriculum to the child and comparing M.A. with reading.

Dr. Yoakam discussed research projects in which he was particularly interested.

1. A current study of the vocabularies of underprivileged children in Pittsburgh and Detroit.
2. Vocabulary comparison between privileged and underprivileged children shows that (1) their common vocabulary is a "school vocabulary," (2) vocabulary is related to experience.

Dr. Helen Bachman reported on a current research project involving 160 students, grouped in five sections. Twenty minutes, three times a week, the children will work for a ten-week training period. The groups are:

1. Control group
2. 10 weeks training on digits
3. 10 weeks training on phrases
4. Digits and phrases
5. 5 weeks training in digits, 5 weeks training on phrases

The groups were tested at the beginning of the experiment and will be tested at the end of the period to see which gets the most out of the training.

Miss Hurlbert reported for Dr. Durrell concerning the theses and dissertations in the office of education. The file is completed there from 1941 to 1945, but no work has been done to file the material received from 1945 to 1947. It was suggested that members of the Conference write their Congressman to ask that funds be appropriated to keep this material up to date.

Miss Hurlbert reported on research at the high school level. Students received a much lower score on adjective tests than on nouns and verbs.

Some of the studies may not square with other tests. That is one of the incentives of research.

James Fitzgerald of Fordham reported on a detailed piece of research of one of his students, Sister Gervage Blanchard. She examined comics very intensively to see whether or not the concepts were in accord with basic moral standards. The majority of the concepts studied were not in accord with moral standards.

A highlight of the 1949 business meeting, attended by twenty-eight members, was the decision to publish an annual directory "listing names and addresses of active and associate members, the standing committees and research committee (committees preparing bulletins), officers, and the constitution." Plans were being made with NCTE to publish five bulletins, and at this session the decision was made to publish the bulletins first as articles in *Elementary English* and later to reprint them as bulletins.

The only bulletin actually published in the decade after 1941 was *Readability*, edited by Edgar Dale. In this bulletin, "The Concept of Readability" is presented by Dale and Jeanne S. Chall, who also

wrote the last chapter, "Techniques for Selecting and Writing Readable Materials." Other chapters are "Readability Formulae—An Evaluation" by Irving Lorge, "The Use of Vocabulary Lists" by E. W. Dolch, and "Typography and Readability" by Harold E. Burtt. Dale and Chall state in the first chapter that "Most of the formulae measure comprehensibility by some measure of vocabulary load and sentence structure. Some use a measure of the relative number of ideas and of human interest. However, none of them adequately account for concept difficulty, semantic variations of commonly used words, etc." This viewpoint was extended by Lorge, who wrote: "Readability formulae are no panacea. They do not tell anything about the kind of ideas expressed or the interrelationships among them. At best they are yardsticks."

In addition to a discussion of bulletins, the 1949 luncheon meeting featured the following speakers:

> Emmett A. Betts, "Guidance in the Critical Interpretation of Language"
>
> Marion A. Anderson, "Systematic versus Incidental Instruction in Reading"
>
> J. Conrad Seegers, "Are There Essential Language Facts and Principles That Children Should Know?"
>
> Mildred A. Dawson, "Systematic versus Incidental Practice in the Mastery of Language Skills"

The Executive Committee at the time was concerned with the future of the Conference, with some members suggesting that affiliation with NCTE was necessary. At the same time, there was a strong expression that active membership be held to no more than twenty-five persons.

The practice followed in 1944 and 1945 of having an NCRE session at NCTE meetings was continued in 1948 and 1949. Dora V. Smith, Helen K. Mackintosh, and William S. Gray discussed "Research in Growth toward Maturity in the Language Arts" in 1948, with Edgar Dale reporting on "Studies in Readability" and J. Conrad Seegers discussing "Concept Development as a Factor in Language Growth" in 1949.

Proposals for Merger with NCTE

From its founding until the present, NCRE has had close ties with NCTE. The principal basis for the tie in earlier days was the role of *The Elementary English Review* in both organizations. W. Wilbur

Hatfield, secretary-treasurer of NCTE, issued a welcome to *The Review* in *The English Journal* in 1924, and in 1929 he wrote that "the NCTE Executive Committee . . . has just accepted *The Elementary English Review* as a second official journal."

But the journal was not the only tie. At least a majority of the early NCRE members were also members of NCTE. Some were active in both organizations. For example, Harry A. Greene, Robert C. Pooley, F. H. Bair, Walter S. Guiler, Delia Kibbe, Lou LaBrant, Maude McBroom, Angela M. Broening, Helen K. Mackintosh, and C. C. Certain, all members of NCRE in the 1930s, were involved in the preparation of *An Experience Curriculum in English*, an influential document in the growth of NCTE published by D. Appleton-Century Company for NCTE in 1935. Furthermore, Dora V. Smith and Robert C. Pooley, both active in NCRE in its early days, were presidents of NCTE (Smith in 1936 and Pooley in 1941). Later, early NCRE members Broening, LaBrant, Mackintosh, and Ruth G. Strickland also attained that honor. Still later, David H. Russell, Harold A. Anderson, Margaret Early, John J. DeBoer, George R. Carlsen, Charlotte Huck, William A. Jenkins, Yetta M. Goodman, and Alan C. Purves were all NCTE presidents and at various times active in NCRE.

As suggested earlier, Certain was a key person in the founding of NCRE and its early growth. He served as secretary-treasurer but in many ways was an executive secretary, so his death in 1940 left a considerable number of tasks for others. J. Conrad Seegers of Temple University, who became secretary-treasurer, did not want to undertake all that Certain had done, and even with other officers assuming greater responsibilities, there was a feeling that NCRE was "at loose ends." Thus, in correspondence from and to Seegers in early 1941 there was talk of merger with some other organization. For example, in a letter to E. W. Dolch, Seegers reported that he had "talked with Dr. Gray" and that "he seemed to think that eventually we should, or might have to, merge with some other organization." He also reported, though, that Emmett A. Betts, Broening, and Trabue, among others, held a contrary opinion. Smith pointed out that "The programs of the elementary section [of NCTE] have been essentially different from the sort of thing we have done in the National Conference . . . the two groups have attracted very different people. Whether or not union would strengthen both groups or whether it would mean the disintegration of both is a problem."

The idea of merger lay dormant for several years, largely due to the war, but there was correspondence about it that led to the formation of a committee to "consider the relationship of the two organizations." This committee was chaired by Smith and included Ethel Mabie Falk,

Dolch, Trabue, and Seegers representing NCRE and Pooley, Broening, and Mildred A. Dawson representing NCTE. All were or had been members of both NCRE and NCTE. Smith, during a session of the Conference at the NCTE meeting in Minneapolis in 1945 (as indicated earlier, NCRE did not meet nationally in 1944, 1945, and 1946), led a discussion concerning the merger. This led to a formal proposal by NCTE in early 1946, after which Falk, then NCRE president, asked Seegers to "prepare a letter with which we might circularize the membership of the Conference, soliciting opinion concerning that proposal."

Both the NCTE merger proposal (prepared by Broening, Harold A. Anderson, and Smith—all prominent members of both NCRE and NCTE) and the NCRE reply (drafted by Trabue) were rather formal statements. Essentially NCTE proposed that NCRE become the Research Committee of NCTE (but only "for an initial term of five years"); that NCRE funds be turned over to NCTE but be earmarked for the work of the Research Committee; that future profits from the Research Committee's work become a part of "the general Council funds," but with NCTE making annual appropriations to the Committee; and that the Research Committee initiate research, prepare publications, and "sponsor breakfasts, luncheons, or other types of meetings in connection with the annual meetings of the NCTE, AASA, and other professional groups."

The polling of NCRE members (nineteen of the thirty-three were also NCTE members) by Seegers resulted in a majority favoring *affiliation* (the term *merger* seemed to be avoided in the written documents) and authorized the NCRE Executive Committee to proceed at working out an arrangement. There were, however, many reservations expressed about the NCTE proposal. The principal one concerned "turning over its funds without any strings" (although this was not an accurate statement). In these days of inflation, the dollar amount (about $1,300) may seem very little to have caused so much trouble. However, since NCTE's "net worth" was reported as $25,000 in 1940, and even though it was undoubtedly larger by 1946, the $1,300 (and future royalties) would have been a substantial addition to NCTE funds, funds that were particularly needed because of the establishment in 1945 of the NCTE Commission on the English Curriculum. The amount, though, probably was not as important to those resisting merger or affiliation as was control of the funds, particularly after the "trial" years.

Other reservations were expressed about who would appoint the chairman of this Research Committee and who would determine what research and reports would be the Committee's concern; and there was

a fear concerning the loss of contact with school administrators since there was a general feeling that NCRE's activities had made an impact upon them. There was also concern about "becoming outnumbered" and a lingering doubt about NCTE's interest in the elementary schools. This was clearly expressed on the ballot of one member, Harry A. Greene:

> I suggest that we don't get tied up in a contract to prevent this or a similar group from re-organizing under this name IF the NCTE forgets its responsibility to the elementary school group as it did previously. Perhaps NCRE has served its purpose for the time being.

The reservations *did* arouse the Council. Even Lou LaBrant, who over the years was move involved with NCTE activities than with those of NCRE, wrote that "My own feeling is that the Council has not been, as an organization, too well aware of the important findings in the field of language, many of which lie buried in the psychological journals."

Since the balloting actually only authorized the NCRE Executive Committee to act rather than authorizing a merger, affiliation, or some manner of association, the response to NCTE left the issue unresolved. This response essentially held that NCRE should not lose its identity, stating that the NCTE proposal did "not provide as adequately as we think [it] should for a continuance of the distinctive field of activities of the National Conference on Research in English." The response did propose that NCRE "be officially recognized as a division of the Elementary Section" of NCTE, with its own funds.

The record is not clear as to what happened after NCRE responded. The NCTE presidents in 1944 and 1945, Angela M. Broening and Harold A. Anderson, were both NCRE members, and while Helene W. Hartley, president in 1946, was not an NCRE member, she was interested both in elementary school English and in research. However, NCTE presidents over the next several terms after Hartley were from college or university faculties and apparently did not reflect the same interest. Too, the revival of national meetings of NCRE in 1947 tended to tighten the opposition to close affiliation, particularly with the addition of new NCRE members Helen M. Robinson, Marion A. Anderson, Nila B. Smith, and others. The topic was discussed at times during the next few years, but the result of these discussions only led to expressions of cooperation. The Executive Committee minutes of 1949 expressed this cooperation by stating support for the NCTE curriculum project and offering to work out "a program annually with the elementary section of the NCTE." There was some extension of the affiliation-merger discussion into 1949 and 1950, but there

is no evidence of it being discussed after that. Probably the arrangement with NCTE for publication of the NCRE bulletins was as responsible as anything else for the issue being dropped. However, in a 1949 letter, Mildred A. Dawson wrote, "It was for the purpose of keeping the research activities alive that NCRE was continued."

NCTE and NCRE Bulletins

In mid-1947 Mildred A. Dawson, NCRE secretary-treasurer, wrote to then-president Ethel Mabie Falk that Scott, Foresman no longer was willing to sell bulletins that had not been selling well. Earlier, in 1941, the contract with Scott, Foresman had expired. However, Willis H. Scott had indicated that the company would continue to follow the practice of the past until a new contract was agreed to, and the firm did publish two bulletins in 1941. But, partially due to the controversy about *The Elementary English Review* after C. C. Certain's death, along with problems encountered during the war, no bulletins were published after 1941 by Scott, Foresman. Dawson wrote that the publisher was willing to continue selling *Research Problems in Reading in the Elementary School* and *Reading in the Intermediate Grades*, both of which had been selling well (for fifty cents each). Dawson also indicated that she would undertake distribution of the other bulletins (some of the earliest ones were out of print) but suggested that those on hand be sold for twenty-five cents each.

After NCTE purchased *The Review* in 1942 (when the title changed to *Elementary English*), the relationship of the journal to Scott, Foresman changed. John J. DeBoer, the new editor, had expressed a willingness to publish manuscripts by NCRE members. Again, though, the war interfered with bulletin planning so that the manuscripts sent to DeBoer represented individuals rather than the organization. In 1943 DeBoer, responding to a suggestion from NCRE president E. W. Dolch for "a special issue of *The Review* devoted to research in language," thought that this might be possible if "we could be assured of a sufficient market . . . to cover the cost of printing." DeBoer pointed out that he was willing to include in each issue of the journal "at least one article which is limited in its appeal to technical workers," but that he had had to reject an article "from Professor Kyte, of the University of California, which contained some basic and very thorough research in the field of reading vocabulary" because it was "so detailed and required so much expert technical knowledge of work in this field that I did not dare accept it for *The Review*."

Again because of the war, there was no follow-up to the Dolch suggestion. Informally, though, following the war DeBoer arranged

for the reprinting of articles from *Elementary English*—first, those by Edgar Dale and Jeanne S. Chall, Irving Lorge, Dolch, and Harold E. Burtt as the *Readability* bulletin in 1949. In 1950 an agreement was reached between NCRE and NCTE that stated "material, prepared by the Conference, is to be published serially in *Elementary English* (subject to the editor's approval of each manuscript), and reprinted for sale by the Council, which after paying the Conference 15% of the sales receipts, will take all profits and losses." Harold A. Anderson, NCRE president at the time, also reported that DeBoer and W. Wilbur Hatfield, along with the president of the Conference, would decide how many reprints would be made and what their selling price would be.

Apparently, the arrangement ran into trouble almost immediately. DeBoer reported in 1952 that "Emmett Betts had formed three committees which were to report this fall. When I objected that I could not carry three bulletin series in the magazine in one year, he said that few committees meet their deadlines and that I would be lucky if one came through. Actually, all three are ready or nearly ready." In addition, the bulletins were not selling as well as anticipated. NCTE secretary-treasurer W. Wilbur Hatfield had begun to assemble data on costs, sales, and profits, preparing to suggest that the publishing arrangement should be reexamined. While Hatfield did not follow through with this intention, his successor, J. N. Hook, did in 1954. Hook's action was prompted by a lack of communication between NCTE and NCRE officers, or possibly between Hook and DeBoer. Hook was concerned about the delivery of a thousand copies of *Interrelationships among the Language Arts* to his Chicago office with "no previous notice of this publication." To NCRE president Ruth G. Strickland he complained that "No budgetary provision had been made" and "We were not asked where the publication was to be sent." He then suggested that clarification of the publishing arrangement was needed in order to "avoid repetition of this kind of situation."

DeBoer, who had been president of NCRE as well as being editor of *Elementary English*, and Strickland were able to explain that the problem was largely due to Hook's newness to his office and the fact that some practices that had existed in the arrangement between NCTE and NCRE had not been made known to him. However, there was further correspondence, still in 1954, leading essentially to an affirmation of the 1950 agreement but adding that "the Conference [would] notify the Council in advance of the nature, length, and probable publication date of each new bulletin."

This clarification resulted in continuing the publication of bulletins in the 1950s, a period in which many were published. Then, with the change in the executive secretaryship—James R. Squire assumed the position in 1960—a more detailed agreement was enacted. It was determined that normally the bulletins would not exceed seventy-two pages, that only one bulletin would be published each year, and that NCTE would determine the selling prices.

This agreement worked well until the 1970s, when another change in the editorship of *Elementary English* resulted in editorial resistance to publishing the types of material contained in the bulletins. Robert F. Hogan, then NCTE executive secretary, suggested in 1972 that NCTE prepare the bulletins without "going through the pages of the journals." Hogan pointed out that printing the bulletins would make "it necessary for anybody who wants the information to purchase the monograph rather than to dilute that possible market by prior appearance of the articles in one of our journals."

The agreement resulting from Hogan's suggestions—agreed to in 1974—was the basis for the NCRE bulletins published in 1974 and since that time. The agreement essentially is one between the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills and NCRE and provides that the "agreement will continue so long as the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills enjoys continuing funding and operates under its present mandate for information analysis products." Also in the agreement is the establishment of an NCRE Publications Board. Members of the Board are selected by the chair of the Publications Committee and serve for two years. Membership at the time of the publication of *Help for the Teacher of Written Composition: New Directions in Research* included P. David Allen, Rebecca C. Barr, Sidney Bergquist, John R. Bormuth, Alvina Treut Burrows, Earl D. Clark, Robert Emans, Donald Graves, Earl Hansen, Richard Hodges, Marjorie Sedden Johnson, Sara W. Lundsteen, Coleman Morrison, and Helen K. Smith. Because of the present size of NCRE membership, NCRE purchases copies of bulletins at cost for distribution to its members, but NCTE handles the distribution. Another difference in the present agreement from earlier ones is that the bulletins are not copyrighted because of the role of ERIC/RCS.

Bulletins have always been a key part of NCRE and have served professional educators long and well. They have also served as a tie between NCTE and NCRE; a tie with a knot now and then, but one that has essentially been cordial.

3 The 1950s and 1960s

In many ways the heyday of NCRE was in the 1950s and 1960s. The breakfast and luncheon meetings continued, with each focusing on one or more research topics or problems needing research, but joint meetings were begun with the International Reading Association (IRA) and renewed with NCTE. Although research bulletins were not published yearly, sixteen were published during this twenty-year period, and the annual reviewing of published research in elementary school language arts was begun. Perhaps the height was reached, though, with the First Grade Reading Studies (discussed in the following section), a project that owed much to the efforts of NCRE.

From its beginning, NCRE met in February of each year in conjunction with the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) and the American Educational Research Association (AERA). When these organizations grew to the point that they required separate meetings, NCRE began having its annual meetings in conjunction with those of AERA. There was a joint session at the 1960 NCTE meeting, which was prompted both by earlier cosponsored sessions by AERA at the NCTE meetings and by the cosponsored NCRE meetings at NCTE in the 1940s, particularly during the war years. However, there was not a follow-up to the 1960 session until 1964. Continuance of the meetings in conjunction with AERA was generally considered important to the membership. The Executive Committee minutes for 1967 reaffirmed that "NCRE will continue to meet simultaneously with AERA," but also indicated that joint meetings were being planned with NCTE and IRA.

The breakfast meetings of NCRE had regularly been informal exchanges of research ideas and plans. Members came to these sessions planning to test ideas with other researchers; this encouragement and criticism was both expected and sought. This practice continued into the 1950s. However, possibly based upon past experiences when the informality led to monopolization of the exchange by one or two members, prior to the 1957 breakfast members were notified that Helen M. Robinson, William D. Sheldon, and Ralph C. Staiger were scheduled for ten minutes each and Ernest Horn was allocated thirty

minutes. The notice also stated that Clifford P. Archer, Robinson, and Staiger would provide duplicated descriptions of research underway and that other members wishing to report research should contact planning chairman Thomas D. Horn in advance of the meeting.

Comparable planning continued into the early 1960s. Helen M. Robinson, planning the 1960 breakfast, distributed a reporting form to members several months prior to the meeting. Those that were received in time were duplicated for distribution. The principal feature of the reporting form was to outline the design of research planned rather than results of research completed. The breakfast meetings continued generally in this form, except that completed research received attention, and at the suggestion of Theodore Clymer in 1963, an invitation was extended to associate members to report their research.

An example of the reports and discussions at the breakfast meetings was recorded in the minutes of the 1962 meeting. At that breakfast session, Thomas D. Horn described the proposal submitted by the Committee on Research in Reading to the U.S. Office of Education (USOE); Jeanne S. Chall described her Carnegie-funded study of research and practices in beginning reading; Mary C. Austin reported on her reading research, also funded by Carnegie; Gertrude Whipple described a Detroit school system study of "Oral Language Patterns of Culturally Different Children"; Arno Jewett reported on USOE's Project English and discussed the nature and quality of the proposals received; and Warren Cutts told about USOE's efforts to compile a report of research studies in reading (as suggested by NCRE).

The format of the breakfast meetings changed in the middle 1960s with invited speakers (not all NCRE members), although frequently discussions following these talks related both to the talks and to other interests of the members. Many of these discussions resembled the stimulating exchanges of the earlier days. Among the speakers and their topics were Benjamin D. Wright, "Problems of Research in the Language Arts" in 1965; Roger T. Lennon, "Needed Changes in Testing in the Language Arts" in 1966; and Walter T. Petty, "The Status of the 3 R's—Reading, 'Riting, and Reagan" in 1967.

At the beginning of this period, luncheon meetings continued the practice of reporting on bulletins. Edgar Dale reported on *Readability*, Nila B. Smith on *Readiness in Reading and Related Language Arts*, and John J. DeBoer on *Education and Mass Media of Communication*. Each was allowed ten minutes to report. The two principal speakers at the luncheon, however, were editors (and authors) of bulletins being prepared: J. Conrad Seegers ("What Research Shows about Language Development") and A. Sterl Artley ("Research Concerning the Interrelationships among the Language Arts").

As the 1953 program shows (see Figure 3), there were no bulletins underway or completed that could be reported on. This led to a change in programing—that is, bulletins were not "presented" as they had been in the early programs, a practice that has essentially remained.

At the 1954 meeting there were four speakers:

Dorothea McCarthy, "Factors That Influence Growth in the Language Arts"

Paul A. Witty, "Studies of Children's Interests in Television"

Helen M. Robinson, "Influences Which Affect Success in Reading"

Dora V. Smith, "A New Resource for Elementary Teachers"

Beginning in 1960, many of the luncheons focused on reading practices and research. Much of this interest was sparked by NCRE's role in the Cooperative First Grade Reading Studies. Guy L. Bond, Russell G. Stauffer, and William D. Sheldon discussed the work of the Committee on Research in Reading at the 1960 luncheon. Reading received similar attention in 1961, and in 1962 Arthur Gates discussed reading research. Harry Levin was the luncheon speaker in 1965 and spoke on "Reading Research: What, Why, and for Whom." Many NCRE members were taken aback by the 1968 luncheon speech of sociologist David Wilder, "Some Comparisons of NCRE Members with Other Reading Researchers." He indicated that most reading research was being done by nonmembers of NCRE.

Exclusive attention to reading did not prevail during all of the 1960s. In 1963 Nila B. Smith spoke about "Developing Taste in Literature," and in 1966 Kellogg Hunt (later an NCRE member) presented his important research findings about the sentence structures written by average and superior students. The rising interest in language problems of children was shown in 1968 when Millard Black spoke on "Language Development of Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils." In 1969 H. Alan Robinson spoke on "Teacher Education and the Communication Skills."

NCRE sessions at the NCTE meetings were established in the late 1960s with these speakers and topics:

1964 — Edgar Dale, "Vocabulary: Techniques of Measurement and Major Findings"

1965 — Jeanne S. Chall, "What to Test When: Relationships among Types of Programs, Outcomes and Time of Testing" and Helen A. Murphy, "Evaluation in the Classroom"

LUNCHEON and PROGRAM

of the

National Conference on Research in English

Atlantic City, New Jersey

Tuesday, February 17, 1953

12:00 Noon

AMBASSADOR HOTEL

Room 125

Theme: The Language Arts Move Ahead

Presiding: David H. Russell, President, National Conference on Research in English; University of California, Berkeley, California

* * *

SPEAKERS

The Changing Language Arts in the Elementary-School Program, Mildred A. Dawson, Boone College, North Carolina

Potential Contributions of Television to the Language-Arts Program, I. Keith Tyler, Ohio State University

Promoting Insights and Understanding through Reading, Arthur I. Gates, Teachers College, Columbia University

Literature for Children in a Troubled World, Bernice E. Leary, Madison Public Schools, Madison, Wisconsin

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Luncheon Tickets $3.00. Tickets may be secured at the Registration Headquarters, Atlantic City Auditorium before 10 a.m. Tuesday, February 17. No tickets sold at the door.

Figure 3. NCRE Program for the February 1953 Annual Meeting.

1966 — Albar Pena and Elizabeth Ott on teaching English to Spanish-speaking children

1967 — Sara W. Lundsteen, "Teaching Children to Think through Reading" and Carleton M. Singleton, "Imagery and Reading Comprehension"

1968 —Kenneth Goodman, "Should the Schools Teach Standard Oral Language to Primary Children Who Are Speakers of Non-Standard Dialects?"

1969 — Children's Television Workshop

Although the International Reading Association was not founded until 1956, NCRE soon was sponsoring sessions at IRA national meetings. One of the first, in 1962, found NCRE members William Eller, Helen A. Murphy, and Walter T. Petty discussing "A Research Pitfall—Jumping to Conclusions." At the 1964 meeting, Russell G. Stauffer discussed "Language and the Habit of Credulity," and in both 1965 and 1966 Guy L. Bond and Donald D. Durrell discussed the First Grade Reading Studies. In 1968 Doris Gunderson reported on the "Interdisciplinary Committee on Reading Problems."

The publishing of bulletins flourished during these years, and the variety of subject areas covered in them reflected the interests of NCRE members. The bulletins were an important contribution to the profession, both reporting research and calling attention to research that was needed. David H. Russell, in the preface to the 1952–1953 directory, stressed the importance of research to teaching, pointing out that this importance was increasingly being recognized. He stated that the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development was then launching a research program with a full-time director and that NCTE was studying ways of making research available to its members. He further wrote of the recognition that NCRE had always given to the importance of research, stating that NCRE "publications in the language arts at the elementary school level are by far the most complete sources of research in this field." Ruth G. Strickland, the next NCRE president, continued the message of the importance of research and discussed changes in research and the bulletins that NCRE had published and were planning for future publication. Bulletins published at that time were *Readability; Education and the Mass Media of Communication; Readiness for Reading and Related Language Arts; Interpreting Language: An Essential of Understanding; Areas of Research Interest in the Language Arts; Factors That Influence Language Growth;* and *Child Development and the Language Arts.* Bulletins were then being planned about language arts interrelationships, critical reading, and children's writing, all of which were

published in the late 1950s. Bulletins planned on "Differentiated Guidance in Language" and "Critical Use and Interpretation of Language" were never completed.

In the 1960s, the following bulletins were published: *Research Methods in the Language Arts* (1961), *Development of Taste in Literature* (1963), *Language and the Higher Thought Processes* (1963), *Research on Handwriting and Spelling* (1966), *Research in Oral Language* (1967), *Readability in 1968* (1968), and *What We Know about High School Reading* (1969).

The practice of including critiques in the bulletins was discontinued for those published after World War II. These later bulletins, though, were written by committees—each chapter having one or more authors—rather than having been written by one person, as were most of the annual bulletins of the earlier years. It was the task of the editor of the bulletins to plan for the desired coverage and to assure a reasonable degree of coherence in what was reported.

A perusal of these sixteen bulletins published in the 1950s and 1960s emphasizes the amount of research that has been done and the informative way it is reported. The reporting also serves as a reminder of some virtual truisms about teaching and learning and identifies many of the gaps in our knowledge where research is still needed. For instance, in the 1950 bulletin about mass media, edited by John J. DeBoer, the point is stressed "that the *best* learning (that is, learning which lasts and which functions in use) results from active experience, and *varied* experience, rather than from passive assimilation and recitation of fact." Perhaps equally true is the statement in *Research Methods in the Language Arts* (1969) that "the methods used to teach English now differ little, if at all, from the methods in vogue at the turn of the century." The 1953 bulletin, *Factors That Influence Language Growth*, with Dorothea McCarthy as chairman, is remarkably current regarding factors that bear upon language development. Helen Heffernan's list of needed research about readiness in the 1951 bulletin and the recognition by the Stanford researchers in the 1966 bulletin that the relative merits of different procedures in spelling instruction were not at that time settled are examples of needed research that might just as easily appear in bulletins today.

In addition, three quotations taken from *Children's Writing: Research in Writing and Related Skills*, published in 1961 and edited by Alvina Treut Burrows, are as important today, and as true, as they were then. In the first, Margaret B. Parke remarks:

> Three books were powerful in pointing up the direction that language teaching should assume at all levels. Hatfield, writing for the National Council of Teachers of English, analyzed the

> aspects of writing, reading, and speaking, stressed the unity of the various language arts areas, and stimulated thinking about the interrelationships among them. Yearbooks of the Department of Elementary School Principals and the National Society for the Study of Education crystallized Hatfield's point of view still further.

John J. DeBoer, quoting from a 1941 book by Franklin Bobbitt, said: "By the time the child is six years of age, and before he has begun to read, he has as good a knowledge of grammar as he has of vocabulary or pronunciation; and this is very considerable," and Ruth G. Strickland stated, "Several kinds and units of writing from each individual should be examined before passing judgment on writing skills."

Other reports of research by NCRE members also became prominent during this period. The practice of reporting language arts research in yearly articles in *Elementary English* was begun during Marion A. Anderson's term as NCRE president, primarily because of the effort of Ralph C. Staiger, who was chairman of the Research Committee. Staiger sent questionnaires to the deans of 250 graduate schools and to all NCRE members, seeking information about research in elementary school language arts completed in 1956. In the April 1957 issue of *Elementary English*, an article by Anderson and Staiger reported the research compiled from the 112 schools that responded. No report was made in 1958, but the November 1959 *Elementary English* had a report by Staiger of 284 studies done in 1958. Again there was a one-year gap in the reporting with no report in 1960, but in 1961 Staiger reported on the 1960 research.

Regularity in this reporting began in 1962, with a summary by Margaret Early of 1961 research. This report was identified as an activity of the NCTE Committee on Research rather than the responsibility of NCRE; however, while Early was chair of the NCTE Research Committee, she was also NCRE vice-president. The report by Walter T. Petty in 1963 stated that it was "sponsored by the NCTE Research Committee and NCRE."

Petty was joined in the reporting in 1964 by Paul Burns of the University of Tennessee. This pairing in the annual reporting continued for three more years, with William D. Sheldon and Donald Lashinger taking over in 1967 to report on research. The last of the annual reviews, identified as "the fifteenth annual review," written by Sheldon, Lashinger, Patricia Mahone, and Lorraine Dagastino, appeared in the November and December 1976 issues of *Language Arts*.

NCRE participated in other endeavors to report research during this period. In 1961, NCRE prepared a four-page form for reporting

reading research done between 1950 and 1960 for the U.S. Office of Education to use in preparing an annotated bibliography. This bibliographic service was the beginning of what later became the ERIC system.

Related to this reporting on research was the preparation of a five-page listing of needed research in reading by a committee headed by Russell G. Stauffer and consisting of Emery Bliesmer, Donald D. Durrell, Albert J. Harris, Constance M. McCullough, and Nila B. Smith. This listing was divided into ten areas: beginning reading, reading skills, affective learning, teacher education, nature of the reading process, reading disability, parents, school organization, measurement and evaluation, and materials.

The NCRE Executive Committee and membership also considered a number of other interesting projects and activities. For example, early in the 1950s there were plans for a cooperative study that would be a "survey of the types and frequency of situations in the school that provide need and opportunity for instruction." The plan was to engage at least twenty-five schools in which teachers would keep diary records of situations in which such need or opportunity arises. Just what happened to this plan is not clear, but apparently the study was never completed.

In another vein, in 1959 there was a good deal of discussion about recognizing an outstanding piece of research yearly, publishing it, and presenting the researcher with a scroll or other award. That same year a series of questions posed by Guy L. Bond was discussed, prompting further cooperative research efforts. These questions, stated below, still merit attention.

1. How can research be evaluated to know which studies warrant serious consideration?
2. How can we get research findings interpreted and reported for wider use?
3. Is it possible to appraise the degree to which current instructional materials reflect research findings?
4. Should teacher training institutions give courses in recent research with critical evaluations of methods used and validity of findings?
5. How can in-service training procedures be encouraged to focus on research findings and their implications for instructional change?
6. How can research be better presented in educational meetings so as to stimulate interest in research?

Earlier, in 1951, consideration was given to publishing a handbook on research in English, but this idea was abandoned because it would be too expensive. Yet in 1968, apparently because NCRE was then thought, by some, to be "flush" with funds, there were suggestions for using some of the money to sponsor a lectureship or to have a session to plan for cooperative research. In another area, there was also debate about the length of the term of committee members and consideration of lengthening the terms of the president and vice-president. However, the principal bylaw change was simply to expand the Executive Committee membership from five to seven. Not part of the bylaw changes were changes made in the committee structure, changes that reveal the ascending and descending interests of the membership over the twenty-year period. In 1951 the committees were Membership, Research Bulletins, Needed Research, Factors in Language Growth, Interrelationships among the Language Arts, Child Development and the Language Arts, Listening, and Creativeness in Communication. The latter five of these planned to develop bulletins (and all but the last two did). In 1954 the only committees established were Membership, Research in Reading for Secondary Schools (for a bulletin), Publicity, and Research. In 1960 the Research in Reading Committee was established with subcommittees for publishing, needed research, cooperative research, and research designs. The earlier Research Committee became Research Bulletins. Membership and Publicity continued into the 1960s, and in 1961 Research in Language Arts, with subcommittes for reporting and needed research, was added to the 1960 committee structure. In 1963 and continuing through the remainder of the 1960s, Membership, Publicity, and Research Bulletins committees continued, with the other committees apparently combined into one called Cooperative Research.

The dependence in NCRE's early days on C. C. Certain as secretary-treasurer to hold the organization together descended after his death in 1940 to those who followed in that position, though none had the time and office facilities for doing what Certain had done. In the 1950s and 1960s the secretary-treasurers were Gertrude Whipple (four years), Helen A. Murphy (five years), Margaret Early (three years), Helen Huus (four years), and William Eller (three years). Each of these individuals helped plan programs, corresponded with cooperating organizations, and participated in getting bulletins published, along with keeping minutes of meetings and Executive Committee sessions, collecting dues, publishing the directories, paying bills, and investing NCRE funds. The activities, focus, and growth of the organization during those years was due very largely to the efforts of these people.

The First Grade Reading Studies

NCRE president Mary Agnella Gunn, writing in the directory for 1957–1958, asked, "Are there not new opportunities now for enterprise which we might profitably explore as possible means for increasing our service? For example, could we not make more effective and dynamic use of the opportunities for extended research which we ourselves could offer to each other? Would not the results of certain of our intensive, short-term studies be made more significant and far reaching by broad, carefully-planned cooperative research? Could we not with profit consider the possibility of initiating certain broad carefully-planned studies which might best be carried out on a cooperative basis?"

This surely was one of the first expressions favoring the type of research that resulted in the cooperative studies of first-grade reading funded by the U.S. Office of Education during 1964–1965 (with some studies continuing through 1966–1967). The year after Gunn posed the previously stated questions on research, Thomas D. Horn, NCRE president that year, wrote in the preface to the directory, "Many people are talking about research these days. The National Conference on Research in English does something about research." These were not idle words; during his term of office he appointed a Research Committee with William D. Sheldon of Syracuse University as general chairman. This committee consisted of the following four subcommittees:

Subcommittee on Publishing Research in the Language Arts
Ralph C. Staiger, Mississippi Southern College (chairman)
David H. Russell, University of California
Helen M. Robinson, University of Chicago
Carleton M. Singleton, University of Iowa
Clifford P. Archer, University of Minnesota

Subcommittee on Sponsoring and Directing Research in the Language Arts
Donald D. Durrell, Boston University (chairman)
William S. Gray, University of Chicago
Edwin H. Hill, University of Pittsburgh
George R. Carlsen, University of Texas
Arno Jewett, U.S. Office of Education

Subcommittee on Needed Research in the Language Arts
Russell G. Stauffer, University of Delaware (chairman)
Fred E. Harris, Baldwin-Wallace College

Edgar Dale, Ohio State University
Ernest Horn, University of Iowa
Lou LaBrant, New Orleans, Louisiana

Subcommittee on Reporting Research in the Language Arts

Guy L. Bond, University of Minnesota (chairman)
Margaret Early, Syracuse University
Dwight L. Burton, Florida State University
Donald Cleland, University of Pittsburgh
Irving Lorge, Columbia University

The following year, principally through the efforts of Sheldon, the Carnegie Corporation awarded a grant of $5000 to the Research Committee. A stipulation of the grant was that the emphasis of the research effort should be on reading. This was, of course, agreeable since it was a beginning of the type of research effort NCRE was seeking and since most of the members of the committee were primarily interested in reading research. The funds were used for a seminar held October 22 to 25, 1959, at Syracuse University. Sheldon listed three purposes of the meeting:

1. Recommendations for the effective utilization of present research knowledge about reading
2. Exploration of profitable directions for future research about reading
3. Recommendations for coordinating future research about reading

Those attending the seminar were organized into the following three groups, with different membership and objectives:

1. How to most effectively utilize present research about reading—Guy L. Bond (chairman), Emery Bliesmer, Margaret Early, Nila B. Smith, Arno Jewett
2. Directions for future research in reading—Russell G. Stauffer (chairman), Theodore Clymer, Donald D. Durrell, Jeanne S. Chall, James Soffietti, Ralph C. Staiger
3. Coordinating research in reading—William D. Sheldon (chairman), Mary C. Austin, A. Sterl Artley, John Honey, Thomas D. Horn, Helen M. Robinson, Constance M. McCullough

Most of the seminar time was spent in separate meetings of the groups, with luncheon and dinner meetings used for progress reports from the groups and exchanges by all members. The seminar concluded with recommendations by each group and endorsement of these by all who attended.

The group on presenting research proposed the preparation of a descriptive bibliography of reading research organized by decades, a number of evaluative summaries of this research, and the writing of pamphlets for school personnel and teachers in training. The group on future research formulated plans for two three-year group studies, one at the primary level and the other at the middle-grade level. The group coordinating research suggested the annual preparation of a list of topics on what research had been started, the holding of meetings on research designs, and the establishment of an NCRE committee charged with providing leadership in improving research.

The recommendations of the seminar had rather quick impact. Both the AASA and IRA meetings of the next year devoted sessions to the "critical analysis of research designs," and negotiations were begun with the U.S. Office of Education regarding the preparation of a descriptive bibliography of research. Of perhaps greater importance was the holding of a follow-up seminar, resulting from the efforts of Helen M. Robinson and funded by the William S. Gray Foundation, at the University of Chicago, October 20–23, 1960.

In attendance at this seminar were Jewett, Artley, Early, Chall, Bond, Stauffer, Durrell, Smith, Bliesmer, McCullough, Staiger, Austin, Thomas D. Horn, Clymer, and Robinson—all of whom had attended the Syracuse conference—and Leo Fay, David H. Russell, Donald Cleland, Albert J. Harris, and William Eller. Again, three groups were organized for discussing and reporting: Needed Research, Cooperative Research, and Research Design. The principal result of this seminar was the development of a model for the "Study of the Effects of Methods of Teaching on Beginning Reading." This model spelled out the factors to be controlled, those to be manipulated, and the statistical treatments to be used.

A tentative proposal was developed by the NCRE Subcommittee on Cooperative Research in 1961 and submitted to the U.S. Office of Education. However, nothing happened until 1963, although Stauffer wrote in 1962 that Thomas D. Horn had presented a proposal to the U.S. Office of Education that stemmed from the meetings in Syracuse and Chicago. He also noted that the Office of Education had established a Cooperative Research Program with Francis Ianni as Acting Director and that Horn was working with Ianni and J. N. Hook (then coordinator of Project English) in improving the proposal. Too, a number of NCRE members attended a Cooperative Research Conference at the Carnegie Institute of Technology sponsored by the U.S. Office of Education, and Stauffer expressed the hope "that the report of this and other similar conferences may influence research in the teaching of English and actual teaching of English in the future."

In 1963, NCRE's efforts produced results. The Office of Education, as a part of its new Cooperative Research Program, had established a Cooperative Research Council. Donald D. Durrell was a member of this council and a friend of Francis Keppel, then new as the Commissioner of Education. Durrell wrote to Keppel about the need for new research procedures, particularly proposing greater support for cooperative research:

> The controversies about beginning reading could easily be resolved by large-scale cooperative research. Ten days ago, I sent the attached inquiry to eighty reading research people. Already thirty replies have come, all favorable to the idea, with twenty-five indicating a desire to present research proposals. If only twenty proposals were selected for support, we would involve 400 public school classrooms, compare most major approaches to beginning reading, for an expenditure of $600,000. Such a study would have far-reaching effects on beginning reading practice.
>
> Obviously we need many patterns for the development of the research program, but I would like to see the beginning reading proposal tried as one of the possible approaches to the solution of instructional problems of high interest.

The developing interest of the U.S. Office of Education in cooperative research, particularly in the field of reading, was undoubtedly sparked to action by Durrell's letter. At the next meeting of the Cooperative Research Council, council chairman David Clark questioned: "Do you really think that researchers would engage in research on the same problem with common pre- and post-tests? That would be *competitive* research, creating a *threat* atmosphere." Durrell replied, "The research people in NCRE would, and I'll show you at the next meeting." Durrell immediately sent to all NCRE members (in early April of 1963) a two-page document outlining features of the cooperative research proposal, specifications of individual projects, and suggested topics for study. The document also inquired about how many of the members could submit a proposal by June 10 for a study to begin in September of 1963 if specifications were received from USOE by May 15. Thirty-six NCRE members indicated that they could meet these deadlines. Subsequently, Durrell wrote the USOE specifications, and their distribution (to others besides NCRE members) resulted in 176 proposals. An *ad hoc* committee next reviewed these proposals, and twenty-seven were funded.

Project directors next met at the University of Minnesota at the end of May 1964. At this meeting the University of Minnesota was chosen as the coordinating center of the cooperative research project with Guy L. Bond and Robert Dykstra in charge. The projects began in September of 1964 and involved nearly 30,000 children. The project

directors met at the University of Minnesota twice more during the year. Data from most projects came in during late 1965, with Bond and Dykstra reporting on all the data in the Spring 1967 issue of *Reading Research Quarterly*.

These research projects did not answer all of the questions that many thought would be answered. Even before all the reports were in it was evident that many factors had not been controlled and that some comparisons among methods was not possible. Russell G. Stauffer's account of the studies in *The Reading Teacher* was headed "The Verdict: Speculative Controversy." He pointed out that the USOE-sponsored program did not follow the recommendations of NCRE. He felt (as did many others) that if the model developed at the Chicago seminar had been used, the findings would have been much more valuable. Durrell, speaking at an NCRE meeting in 1965 before the reports were in, was still optimistic. He said, "We must not expect that all questions regarding reading instruction will be answered by this study" and "The most significant outcomes of the national study . . . may well be the pattern it sets for cooperative-competitive research in education." As to specific findings, though, the studies showed that (1) no one method was overwhelmingly and pervasively superior to any other and (2) pupil achievement differences were greater from teacher to teacher within methods than they were from method to method. An interesting—and realistic—final comment was made by Constance M. McCullough to this writer in 1979: "Mostly [they] raised more questions and set in motion a good deal of 'either-oring' which is relatively unproductive. Instead of assuming that all the good ideas are here, we should be looking for progress through attention to our sins of omission."

The Teacher Effectiveness Study

The oft-quoted finding of the Cooperative First Grade Reading Studies reported above—the preeminent importance of the teacher over method—led to more than four years of cooperative endeavor beginning in the late 1960s by NCRE members seeking to answer these questions: (1) What are the characteristics that distinguish the behaviors of the successful or effective teacher from those of the unsuccessful or ineffective teacher? (2) How can researchers approach the problem of how to study specific teaching behaviors in the language arts curriculum, and how can they assess the relationship of these behaviors to pupils' learning?

Cooperative research has been an interest of NCRE almost from its founding, and because the efforts in the First Grade Reading Studies had worked relatively well and many NCRE members had participated in them—in fact, had provided the leadership—there was discussion, particularly in the Executive Committees of the late 1960s, about further cooperative research. Albert J. Harris, president in 1967-1968, had been particularly active in seeking funds for such research, and both he and Walter T. Petty, president in 1968-1969, pushed for active involvement of NCRE members in cooperative research endeavors, with or without outside funding. Thus, in 1969 H. Alan Robinson was appointed chairman of the Cooperative Research Committee and was urged to get "something going." This he did. First was a meeting in New York in November 1969 to discuss what the committee should do about initiating some kind of cooperative effort. Present at this meeting were Harris, Petty, Sidney Bergquist, Roger Farr, James T. Fleming, Josephine Ives, Coleman Morrison, Gus Plessas, and Robinson.

From this meeting a major overall objective evolved: "to actively encourage the training of cooperative research workers." The group also decided that the first concerns of the committee should be (1) a cooperative research effort to study teacher effectiveness and (2) the building of a collection of "samples of children's language throughout the country." Plans were also made for securing general support from NCRE members and gaining guidelines for the development of these projects at the NCRE meeting in Minneapolis in March 1970.

Acceptance and encouragement of the Cooperative Research Committee's plans in Minneapolis led to an informal meeting on April 16, 1970, at New York University of interested faculty and graduate students from the New York City and Philadelphia areas. This group decided that NCRE members should be asked to help collect information about studies then underway that aimed at identifying some facet or facets of teacher behavior and their relation to children's achievement, as well as citations and notes then available on helpful research reports, articles, books, films, and tapes that were concerned with teaching behavior. Alvina Treut Burrows was asked to chair a subcommittee to do the initial planning of the organization of the committee's efforts, including possible approaches to the detailed steps that would need to be taken later. NCRE president Dolores Durkin confirmed this appointment, and from this time on Burrows provided the "lion's share" of the leadership for the project.

The next step in the study occurred at the Anaheim meeting in May 1970 at which time Albert J. Harris reviewed the overall plans and

ideas growing out of the NYU meeting. The Conference members suggested that a detailed proposal be written for a pilot study directed at determining teaching behaviors and that an effort be made to obtain funding. The other portion of the cooperative Research Committee's work was kept alive by Sidney Bergquist presenting a proposal for the development of a language data bank of samples of children's language.

This meeting was followed by one in February 1971 in New York City at which the committee members and invited NCRE members and graduate students participated. Those present organized into two groups. One group worked on the problem of how to select teachers for analysis of their classroom language arts teaching; the other group planned research design for assessing teaching behaviors. From the work of the two groups, as well as from earlier discussions among many NCRE members, it became clear that a careful examination had to be made of research already done in the field. Sara W. Lundsteen was appointed chair of a Literature Search Committee that would explore the research literature of the preceding five years. To facilitate the literature search, Burrows and H. Alan Robinson developed a bibliography form for recording many kinds of data relative to teaching behaviors and pupil achievement.

Another aspect of the study was the development of criteria of excellence in teaching the language arts. The following NCRE members attending the 1972 breakfast meeting individually wrote statements of the criteria that were then categorized and put in final form by Burrows and Robinson: Lundsteen, John Carroll, Robert Emans, John Follman, Kenneth Goodman, Richard Hodges, Thomas D. Horn, Helen Huus, Marjorie Sedden Johnson, Roy A. Kress, Bernard O'Donnell, William D. Page, James R. Squire, Eileen Tway, Samuel Weintraub, and Willavene Wolf.

The results of the literature search and the criteria of excellence in teaching the language arts were published in 1974. This publication, *Teacher Effectiveness in Elementary Language Arts: A Progress Report,* reports only the first steps toward achieving the objectives of the study as outlined by the Cooperative Research Committee, but they are important first steps. For one thing, the Literature Search Committee reported that although little research was found providing precise reports of teaching behaviors, "a number of studies were discovered having peripheral value to each of the language arts components. They constitute a highly useful approach to new research (1) by identifying significant problem areas of teacher-pupil interaction in language arts, (2) by revealing the kinds of detail needed for arriving

at some differentiating teaching behaviors, and (3) by illustrating some useful techniques for initiating the identification and assessment of teaching behaviors."

The committee recognized that for actual completion of the study many researchers would need to be involved and perhaps a ten- to fifteen-year period of time would be required. In fact, a plan for such an extensive study is given in the progress report publication, along with an expression of the hope that researchers would take up the phases of the study that were not completed. While some research has been done related to this project, it has been individual efforts and not the major study proposed in the publication. It is unfortunate that adequate funding for full completion of the cooperative reseach was not obtained. NCRE provided limited funds for some meetings and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills published the report, but the complexity of the problem, including the time required, exceeded the resources available.

4 The 1970s

The 1970s began with an intensive NCRE effort to engage the membership in cooperative research. The principal result of this effort was described in the preceding chapter, under the heading The Teacher Effectiveness Study. This particular cooperative research effort was an outgrowth of concern by the Executive Committee in 1969 and earlier that NCRE needed some "pepping up." This concern led to a questionnaire being sent to all members, active and associate, and the results supported the concern. Only 42 of the 220 members responded to the questionnaire, with those responding stressing the research nature of NCRE, although fewer than half were doing research themselves. A number of the respondents indicated that NCRE was "too traditional and too reading oriented," included too many inactive researchers, and was too concerned with traditional research. A few stated that NCRE should be dissolved. However, the number of positive responses to NCRE's fostering of cooperative research, the expression of many respondents indicating an interest in discussing research ideas with other members, and the number of suggestions for new bulletins provided impetus for the Executive Committee to ignore both the lack of responses and those that were negative and to undertake a cooperative research project and other means for "pepping up" the organization.

The Cooperative Research Committee, chaired from 1974 through 1977 by Marjorie Sedden Johnson of Temple University, endeavored to promote research on teacher effectiveness, particularly by doctoral students. This effort had only moderate success but perhaps received some attention from the later Cooperative Research Committee, chaired since 1978 by Walter MacGinitie. MacGinitie, reporting on April 26, 1979, stated:

> A great deal has been learned, in the past few years, about language structures and strategies people employ in using those structures and their knowledge of the world in order to (as Collins puts it) construct a model of a text. These developments involve structures at various levels and given various names: word concepts, cohesive ties, normative inferences and inference networks, schemata (including story grammars, sense of story and other

> more or less detailed macro-structures in both narrative and expository texts), case relations, and propositional structures. The proposed focus for the work of the Cooperative Research Committee can be stated by asking two questions about any or all of these putative structures: What do children "know" about the structure? and What happens when you teach a child about the structure?

MacGinitie added that the research suggested is not now being done by most NCRE members and suggested that those now doing such research "participate in the proposed project as adjuncts to the Committee. . . ." This suggestion is a departure from types of cooperative research fostered or suggested by NCRE in the past. At this writing, a follow-up to MacGinitie's suggestions and the work of his committee is occurring. It will be interesting to see how effective the effort will be.

The "pepping up" effort continued with an activity begun in 1971 that has proved very popular with NCRE members: the *Newsletter* (now entitled *NCRE Newsletter*). Richard Hodges was the first editor, with succeeding publications chairs becoming the editors during their committee terms. Sara W. Lundsteen, William D. Page, Doris Gunderson, and Robert Dykstra have served as editors. The first newsletters were mimeographed, but they are now printed by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills and appear in the spring and fall.

The first issue of the newsletter included a report by Kellogg Hunt on his study of the effects of teaching transformational sentence-combining to fourth graders, the activities of the Cooperative Research Committee, news items about members' publications and research, and personal items about members' activities. This format has generally been followed in subsequent issues, but with "messages" from NCRE presidents, items about papers presented, and information about programs being added in recent years.

The reporting of research in progress or completed has always been a highlight in the newsletters, particularly since NCRE membership has grown so much that the exchange at the breakfast sessions of the early days is no longer possible. Among the many interesting research items in the newsletters are the following:

> 1972
>
> H. Alan Robinson, Hofstra University, in collaboration with Dan Hittleman, Queens College, is currently engaged in a USOE-funded study of the readability of subject matter material rewritten on the basis of students' oral reading miscues.

Jaap Tuinman, Indiana University, is currently working on a file of out-of-print reading tests.

1973

Dolores Durkin, University of Illinois, announced that in June of this year, she completed a six-year study of children who learned to read in school at the age of four.

1976

Alvina Burrows is studying the history of teaching composition in elementary and secondary schools in America since colonial times.

Harry Sartain, University of Pittsburgh, is nearing completion of a long-term study of the vocabularies in materials read by elementary school children.

1977

Ramsay W. Selden, University of Virginia, finished his doctoral study investigating the frequency of occurrence of surface structures as a basis for predicting syntax in reading.

Johanna S. DeStefano, Ohio State University, is continuing her research on the so-called neutral terms in English.

1978

P. Helen Lewis, Indiana University at South Bend, reports that the ESEA Title III research project "Improving Verbal/Cognitive Skills of Disadvantaged Preschool Children through the Arts" was completed in June.

Beatrice A. Furner, University of Iowa, while on a semester-long developmental assignment, is undertaking research on the readiness phase of handwriting instruction by utilizing a perceptually based method.

1979

Alan C. Purves, University of Illinois, has just finished a reanalysis of the IEA data in reading and literature for the U.S.

Linda B. Gambrell, University of Maryland, is conducting research on induced visual imagery upon the oral language production of good and poor readers.

1980

Jeanne Chall has been awarded a grant from the Spencer Foundation for a three-year study of optimal difficulty of textbooks for learning content and for the development of reading skills.

M. Jean Greenlaw, North Texas State University, has received a grant to conduct an ethnographic investigation of classroom instruction in reading comprehension.

Other items in the newsletters of special NCRE historical interest include:

> Watch for two new NCRE dissemination features. Walter MacGinitie will edit a column entitled "What's New in Comprehension?" for the *Journal of Reading*. This monthly column will be sponsored by the Cooperative Research Committee and NCRE and will focus on specific aspects of instruction and comprehension. Johanna DeStefano will edit a research column on behalf of NCRE that will appear in *Language Arts* in alternate monthly issues. (Fall 1980)

Responses by members to a questionnaire distributed at the breakfast meeting in Houston included the following:

> A number of the suggestions involved ideas for increasing our publication efforts: publish monographs, yearbooks, conference proceedings; expand the newsletter; establish a journal; identify articles that NCRE would recommend for publication in various journals; develop articles for journals; prepare critical reviews of research; produce cassette tapes; update monographs previously published by NCRE; and review research conducted in other countries. (Fall 1978)

> An action to foster research was taken by the Executive Committee meeting in San Francisco in November. That action specifically authorizes financial support of a stipend of $600 for research in listening.

The practice of holding meetings at the AERA, NCTE, and IRA conventions continued in the 1970s until a major change in the location of the annual meeting was made in 1975. A survey in 1974 showed that the majority of the members favored alternating the annual meeting between the meetings held in conjunction with IRA and NCTE conventions rather than continuing to hold the meeting during the AERA meeting. The principal reason for the change was that most members were attending either or both the NCTE and IRA conventions, while only a minority regularly attended AERA meetings. During this decade there were also several departures from having a breakfast annual meeting. This practice was not successful, however, because most members could more easily attend a breakfast meeting.

Another major change in NCRE programs that developed in the 1970s (but that was not held to each year) was the holding of all-day meetings. All-day (and several-day) programs had been practiced occasionally in the 1930s, but meetings throughout most of NCRE history have been for only one or two hours, sometimes extending longer as

discussion sessions. All-day sessions were held in 1971 in New York when NCRE met in conjunction with AERA. Similarly, there were all-day sessions in 1972, 1973, 1974, and 1975 at AERA meetings.

The 1971 all-day session focused on "English Orthography: Research in Reading and Writing" and was chaired at various times by H. Alan Robinson, Coleman Morrison, and Helen K. Smith. Speakers included Richard Hodges, Bruce Cronnell, Frank Smith, J. Richard Block, and Kenneth Goodman.

The 1972 session theme was "Language and Reading Tests: Uses, Abuses, and Misuses." Three questions were posed and discussed:

1. Do tests use the best available knowledge and theoretical bases?
2. Are current tests equally useful and relevant with all groups in our pluralistic society?
3. Are use of tests in accountability and performance contract projects justified?

Speakers were Nicholas Anastasiow, Kenneth Goodman, Joan Baratz, George Prescott, Jaap Tuinman, and James Wardrop. H. Alan Robinson chaired the session, and Roger Farr and John Carroll closed it with a discussion of "The Future of Assessment."

The 1973 meeting had the theme of "Trends and Issues in Language Arts Research," with Johanna S. DeStefano, Sara W. Lundsteen, Lester Golub, and Kenneth Goodman as speakers. The 1974 session focused only on reading: "Research in Reading: Where Are We . . . What Next?" The topics of the talks were "Learning to Read in a Democracy" by Robert Emans, "Comprehension Skills" by Constance M. McCullough, "Early Readers" by Dolores Durkin, "Motivation and Learning" by Mary C. Austin, "The Disadvantaged Student" by Bernice Cullinan, and "Diagnostic Instruments" by Marjorie Sedden Johnson.

The program for the 1975 all-day meeting is reproduced in Figure 4. A unique feature of this program—a feature attributable primarily to the effort of Alvina Treut Burrows, president-elect and program chairman that year—is that the speakers, other than Thomas D. Horn, were first-time speakers at NCRE meetings. Volunteers for the program were solicited in an issue of the *NCRE Newsletter*, and suggested topics were teacher effectiveness, language acquistion, and supervision in the study skills. The speakers on the program were selected by a committee appointed by the president.

These extended sessions showed that NCRE members were interested in and gave attention to many English language arts research concerns. However, as has been true throughout the life of NCRE, reading research continued to receive the most attention in the 1970s—at least at the various meetings.

N C R E MEETING ON RESEARCH

Monday, March 31, 1975

9:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Washington Hilton Hotel; State Room

Presiding: President Coleman Morrison - - Announcements

Chairman of Meeting - - Alvina Treut Burrows

	Speakers
9:20-10:10	Thomas Horn, University of Texas, "Standardized Readiness Tests as Predictors of Reading Achievement for Spanish Dominant Learners"
10:10-10:30	Coffee
10:30-11:00	Alden Moe and Carol J. Hopkins, Purdue University, "The Speaking Vocabularies of Kindergarten, First- and Second-Grade Children"
11:00-11:30	Carolyn Heil, University of Pittsburgh, "The Role of Teachers' Responses While Teaching a Short Story"
11:30-1:00	Lunch
1:00-1:30	Discussion of morning's presentations
1:30-2:00	Charles Lindamood, San Louis Obispo, "The Incidence of Auditory Conceptual Dysfunction among Teachers of Reading and the Language Arts"
2:00-2:30	Margaret Jones, University of Delaware, "Children's Reading Achievement as a Function of Varying Specificity of Purpose Setting Directions"
2:30-3:00	Marciene Mattleman, Temple University, "Specific Teacher Behaviors and Strategies Related to Pupil Achievement"
3:00-3:30	John Follman, University of South Florida, "Some Findings from a Study of Teacher-Effectiveness Scales"
3:30-4:15	Discussion of day's talks
4:15-4:30	President's concluding remarks

Figure 4. NCRE Program for the 1975 Annual Meeting.

Writing has received attention as well. At the NCRE/NCTE session in Chicago in 1976, which Julie M. Jensen chaired, Janet Emig, Donald Graves, Charles Cooper, and Martha L. King spoke on the topic "Research on Composing: Precedents and Priorities." Then in 1977 at the NCRE/AERA meeting session, which Walter T. Petty chaired, Cooper, Graves, Lee Odell, Cindy Courts, Gabriel Della-Piana, and Richard Beach discussed "New Directions for Research on Writing." At a similar session in 1979, Odell, Peter M. Rosenthal, and Sean Walmsley, all at the State University of New York at Albany, discussed "Written Discourse." And in a new NCRE endeavor—a session at the National Conference on Elementary Language Arts meeting—John Mellon spoke on "Writing, Writing Well, Writing Well Enough."

Other programs concerned with reading instruction, and in some instances research, included discussions of "New Trends in Readability for Publishers and Writers of Instructional Materials" by Ed Coleman, H. Alan Robinson, Kenneth Goodman, Dan Hittleman, Laura Smith, and William Fagan at an NCRE session in the 1972 IRA program; "The Right to Read: A Progress Report" by Ruth Holloway, Ira Aaron, and Shirley Feldman at the NCRE session at NCTE in 1973; "The Language Experience Approach to Reading: Theory and Practice" by John Merritt of the Open University in England and Marion Stauffer of the Sanford School in Delaware at an NCRE/IRA session in 1974; "A Modest Proposal for Reading Topic: One Small Step beyond the Great Debate" by Jeanne S. Chall at the annual breakfast at IRA in 1977.

Variety in programs, though, is reflected in these topics:

1970 — "A Description of the National Television Program for Preschoolers," with Edward Palmer as the speaker

1976 — "Oral Language Assessment of the Linguistically Distinct: Techniques and Problems in Research and Development," a symposium chaired by Thomas D. Horn

1977 — "Research in Adult Education: New Thrusts," chaired by Robert Emans, with Elois Skeen and Edward Cobb as speakers

1978 — "Discourse Analysis: Its Usefulness in Research in English Education," chaired by Michael Kibby, with Carl Bereiter, Patrick Finn, Jeannette Grundel, Jerry Morgan, and Charles A. Perfetti as speakers

1979 — "New Directions for Research on Response to Literature," with Richard Beach, Janet Hickman, and William Wasburn as speakers

As reported in the preceding chapter, several sessions during this period, particularly during the first half, included reports about the Teacher Effectiveness Study. Most of the breakfast meetings included attention to some business matters such as bylaw revision and reports by officers and committee chairs. Occasionally, too, there were speakers—Jeanne S. Chall in 1977, Sara W. Lundsteen and Mary A. Wilcox discussing their study, "Oral Language Instruction for Creative Problem Solving," and P. Helen Lewis in 1978 reporting on a project that focused on the improvement of children's verbal skills by teaching through an art medium. There were also discussions by the members, but most of these lacked the focus on and exchange about research that had been characteristic of earlier breakfast meetings.

The 1970s saw the publication of three bulletins. The first, *Teacher Effectiveness in Elementary Language Arts: A Progress Report*, was published in 1974 and discussed in the last chapter. This bulletin (sometimes referred to as a *monograph*, as are the two later ones) set the pattern for the second two in that it was published in conjunction with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills and differed from earlier bulletins in that it was not a reprint of articles published earlier.

The bulletin published in 1975, *Help for the Reading Teacher: New Directions in Research*, edited by William D. Page, is identified in the introduction by Kenneth Goodman as containing "extensions of the theories and methodologies" that had begun to be explored by Edmund Huey "more than three-quarters of a century ago." Supporting this, Helen M. Robinson, author of the first chapter concerning children's behavior while reading, points out that "Huey wrote at length about the 'natural' way of learning to read at home." The bulletin includes chapters on the reading process, miscue patterns, the cloze procedure, and diagnostic procedures. It provides suggestions for instruction based upon observations of what children do when they read. The authors, in addition to Robinson, were Carolyn Burke, Yetta M. Goodman, Jayne A. DeLawter, Kenneth L. Carlson, John R. Bormuth, Peggy E. Williams, Rebecca C. Barr, and Page.

Help for the Teacher of Written Composition (K–9): New Directions in Research, edited by Sara W. Lundsteen, was published in 1976. This bulletin, prepared by a committee consisting of Alvina Treut Burrows, Robert C. Calfee, James T. Fleming, Eileen Tway, and Lundsteen, reviews some research related to composition; suggests teaching practices; discusses the relationship between children's writing and other language skills, the interrelationship of literature and composition, and evaluation procedures; and notes current trends

and needs for future research. Most importantly, it presents twelve basic principles on which writing programs can be based.

The Constitution and By-laws of the Conference were revised four times during the seventies, with the present "official rules" now entitled only "By-laws." (This reflects current practice, likely the result of enlisting the aid of a parliamentarian for the first time! But shouldn't the purpose of the organization be stated?) Major changes (other than the means for expanding the membership, the institution of the Fellow category, and the dropping of associate membership) included separating the secretary-treasurer office into two offices and limiting each officeholder to a single three-year term; abolishing the office of vice-president and instituting that of president-elect; eliminating the requirement that the president-elect previously have served on the Executive Committee (which had been instituted in the 1971 revision, applying then to the vice-presidency); and substituting "desirable" for other statements of qualifications for membership.

Other activities at this time included establishing a committee and criteria for an annual award for meritorious research. In 1979 the Executive Committee authorized "$250 each for travel support or an honorarium to three meetings of NCTE and IRA (November 1979, May 1980, November 1980) for individuals living outside of North America who are selected to participate in the preconvention sessions sponsored by the Ad Hoc NCTE/IRA Committee on the Impact of Child Development Research on Curriculum and Instruction," but apparently no funds were expended.

Membership Expansion

The founders of NCRE wanted an organization for only a few researchers to exchange ideas and findings of their research. Only active researchers were invited to membership. When this author was NCRE president in 1970, Lou LaBrant wrote regarding early membership:

> The original group was small and remained so till in the 40s. It was Dr. Certain's idea that the number should be limited, to permit all of the members to sit around a dining table at the annual meeting and report and discuss informally.

How long the membership was limited so that all could sit around a table is not clear. The earliest membership list available is that for 1937, with 31 names on it, so the "sitting around the table" idea had apparently been abandoned. Yet expansion was not a great concern since only 27 names appear on the 1938 list and 29 on that for 1941.

The names on the 1941 list had changed somewhat, too, from those on earlier lists. Ten names of the 1939 list were not on the 1941 list, although some of these did appear on later lists (possibly dues had again been paid). When associate membership was instituted is not in the records available, although Certain mentioned the category in his 1934 report, and in 1941 there were 60 names on the associate membership list. Moving from associate to active membership status was difficult in the early days of the organization since unanimous consent of all active members (at the breakfast meeting) was required for an individual to be designated as an active member. Close attention was given to whether the person considered for active membership was actually a researcher.

Discussion of membership numbers frequently occurred in early Executive Committee meetings. Although there were 43 active members at the time and only 23 associate members, the 1949 minutes state, "It was the opinion of the group to keep down the active membership to a small number (not much more than 25) of persons actually engaging in research." Possibly the statement was directed at some members with textbook publishing affiliations or in other nonresearching positions (one member's address was the Chamber of Commerce Building in Los Angeles). The question of "whether we must limit our membership to 50" appears in correspondence from 1951 president John J. DeBoer to immediate past-president Edgar Dale. DeBoer wrote that the secretary-treasurer, Gertrude Whipple, "tells me that some of the older members of the organization favor keeping the number down to 50." The correspondence exchange led to polling the members. This resulted in one favoring "the present list of members," three suggesting 60, fourteen favoring 75, three opting for no limitation, and seventeen favoring leaving the matter to the Executive Committee. The conclusion reached was "that the membership committee recommend as many new nominees as it thinks advisable." Active membership in 1952 was 62.

Action concerning the extent of active membership and the actual number continued to differ. For example, there were 82 active members in 1957, but the bylaws of the same date stated that "Active membership shall be conservatively limited" and that "The initial maximum shall be fifty." However, the bylaws also stated that "the number admitted to active membership shall be fixed by the Executive Committee." Apparently the bylaws were revised sometime between 1957 and 1960 since the bylaws in the 1960 directory state that the "maximum membership shall be one hundred," and 94 active members' names were listed.

Active membership was limited each year for the next ten years. The 1969 Executive Committee recognized the fact that some persons who were active researchers were denied membership because of the limit of 100. Perhaps this recognition was prompted by a letter from longtime member Donald D. Durrell, who wrote, "A research organization is of most value to younger members, but we have no younger active members. . . . Some of the most capable research people have been on the associate membership for years" and "membership should be open to competent research people without limitation of numbers." There was resistance to no limitation though. As 1967 president Helen Huus put it, "What most of us need least . . . is another big organization with much administrative detail." Thus, with the approval of the membership, the bylaws in regard to membership were amended in 1970 to read:

> The maximum active membership shall be one hundred ten in 1971, one hundred twenty in 1972, one hundred thirty in 1973, one hundred forty in 1974, and one hundred fifty in 1975 and thereafter.

Early too in the 1970s, concern about declining attendance at business meetings led to this addition to the bylaws:

> Active members (excluding lifetime) who fail to attend any one of five consecutive annual business meetings of the Conference may be dropped from membership by action of the Executive Committee.

There was also extra attention to the bylaw provision that members "shall" be dropped if they are two years in arrears in payment of dues.

The next change in membership numbers came in 1973, with the 1970 provision changed to "New members elected in any one year shall not exceed ten percent of the previous year's membership." The active members voted to abolish the distinction between active and associate membership. All active members became Fellows, with the bylaws providing for future election to Fellow status by requiring membership for three years, nomination by two Fellows, and majority vote of the Executive Committee.

There was also action taken in the 1970s for automatic invitation to membership for recipients of the NCTE Promising Researcher Awards or the IRA Outstanding Dissertation Award. Most of the recipients did join and have retained their membership.

The Fall 1980 issue of the *NCRE Newsletter* reported that the Executive Committee approved 28 persons for membership and 13 currently active members for Fellow status at its May meeting. "Prior

to these actions of the Executive Committee, NCRE membership [for 1979-1980] consisted of 254 active members, 85 Fellows, and 63 lifetime members for a total membership in NCRE of 402." And the 1979 directory lists 11 International Affiliates, 2 of whom are also identified as Fellows.

5 And Now, What Next?

Martha L. King, president in 1979–1980, at least partially set the tone for NCRE today—and probably for the future—in the Spring 1980 *NCRE Newsletter:*

> For the Annual Breakfast meeting at IRA in St. Louis, we intend to return to the format of the "early days" of NCRE and have roundtable discussions. So much interesting and significant research is now being conducted by members of NCRE that we need the time to share questions and discuss together.

This intention was fulfilled with tables labeled by topic—spelling, listening, comprehension, and so forth. Members chose tables by topic, and the meeting concluded with one member reporting from each table on the current research discussed and the needed research that had been suggested.

Another indication of NCRE's future is the statement of P. David Pearson in the Fall 1980 newsletter:

> What I propose is that NCRE establish a more or less systematic and cyclical monograph series: one that would return regularly to particular curricular areas like writing, spelling, listening, reading, creative arts, and—yes—even handwriting.

Then there was the Institute—the "Work-Study Day"—at AERA on April 7, 1980, called by King "Perhaps the most significant event in our efforts to stimulate research. . . ." This session, guided by Pearson, consisted of presentations by Michael Holliday of the University of Sydney and John Bransford of Vanderbilt University and work sessions conducted by Priscilla Drum, Jerome Harste, Tony Petrosky, and Rob Tierney devoted to current issues in language research. King gave the following description of the Institute:

> Originally planned for fifty participants, the Institute drew eighty applicants. The purpose of the meeting was to review the state of knowledge and the current research in four areas: (1) comprehension and composing, (2) literacy assessment, (3) sociopolitical contexts of literacy, and (4) comprehension and the structure of text.

> The four study groups shared information and discussed topics as wide ranging as issues that need to be addressed by the research community to specific plans for research studies and proposals for cooperative research among members.

The Executive Committee authorized bulletins (monographs) in bilingualism, spelling, writing, and listening. At this writing, George Hillocks is well on the way to completing one on "current research on composition," Richard Hodges is planning one on "the state of the art" in spelling, and Doris Gunderson is responsible for planning one on bilingual education. The Executive Committee also authorized in 1980 the payment of a stipend of $600 for research in listening. While this has not been paid as yet, the authorization may stimulate the production of a monograph.

Meetings at the beginning of the 1980s also reflect the strength of NCRE and the breadth of its members' interests. At IRA in 1980, Marianne Amoral of Educational Testing Service, Robert C. Calfee of Stanford, Donna Pina of Albuquerque, Jackson Stenner of the National Testing Service, and Richard Venezky of the University of Delaware spoke to the topic "Issues in the Assessment of Literacy." At the National Language Arts Conference, Thomas D. Horn headed a symposium on "A Longitudinal Study of the Oral Language Development of Texas Bilingual Children."

In 1981 Roy C. O'Donnell and Kenneth Kantor coordinated a program at the NCRE session at AERA in Los Angeles on "Research on the Composing Process." The speakers were Richard Beach of the University of Minnesota, Lillian Bridwell of the University of Nebraska, Charles Cooper of the University of California at San Diego, and Linda Flower and John Hayes of Carnegie-Mellon University. Then at the NCRE cosponsored program at IRA, James R. Squire chaired the session on "Research in Reading by Publishers." This meeting was planned in cooperation with the Association of American Publishers and featured reports and discussion by these publishers' representatives: Janet Moore, Vice President, Knowledge Sciences; Leo Munday, Vice President, Testing Department, Riverside Press Company; Roaxanne McLean, Editorial Vice President–Reading, Scott, Foresman and Company; Barbara Howell, Editor-in-Chief, Silver Burdett Company; Tom Murphy, President, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston; and Richard T. Morgan, President, Macmillan School Division. Jeanne S. Chall, Robert C. Calfee, and Yetta M. Goodman interrogated the publishers' representatives and commented on their remarks.

All of this bodes well for NCRE. The expanded membership of the organization has, of course, changed the nature of the meetings. The level and types of research today have similarly changed, and these

changes are reflected in the monographs as well as in the research of members. But NCRE is hale and hearty, has a renewed focus on research, and has retained the purpose of improving instruction in the language arts. While other organizations—primarily IRA and NCTE—give more attention to research than they earlier did, they still must provide services to members with little interest in or contact with research. Still other organizations seem to depart from efforts to relate research to classroom application. NCRE still focuses on research and its application to classrooms. NCRE is still unique.

Comments from Members

The uniqueness of NCRE is reflected in the following quotations from NCRE members, past and present. Some of the comments are very serious and contemplative; others are in a lighter vein.

> Ideally English is not a separate subject in the elementary school. It should permeate the whole program: yet it is important that the schools be conscious of the growth in language and reading power as such.
>
> Dora V. Smith, 1942

> . . . active members should really be contributing research . . . we should avoid deadwood.
>
> Letter from Gertrude Whipple, 1953

> My most vivid memories are of the very frank, exhilarating discussions that characterized the Tuesday morning breakfast sessions when we each presented our research problems and plans.
>
> Ethel Mabie Falk, 1977

> *Figure this one out*—The twenty-two members who have paid their dues will be asked to pay dues in 1948 in the same way as the fourteen who did not pay.
>
> [Unidentified quotation]

> No one seems to know where the bulletins of the national conference are. I have had several letters from the library of the University of California saying that Scott-Foresman knows nothing of them. Regardless of what happens about affiliations between the two organizations, I wish the conference could take steps to secure the booklets and give them over for handling to such an organization as the NCTE or the AERA.
>
> Letter from Dora V. Smith to J. Conrad Seegers, 1945

If the child has nothing which seems to him worth saying or no one to whom he wishes to say it, it is absurd to expect him to learn to express himself by being forced through certain performances.

Marion R. Trabue, 1935

One of the problems with educational research is that it seems neither to synthesize nor cumulate.

P. David Pearson, 1980

I believe our organization could serve education effectively by reviewing research studies *qualitatively*.

A member, 1970

Being creative is not a good way to get into NCRE.

A member, 1970

I hope you will not object to the use of stationery which was printed five years ago and never used. We should not waste paper, we are told.

J. Conrad Seegers

Enclosed is a check for $1.00 to take care of active membership dues.

Emmett A. Betts, 1941

A crying need, it seems to me, is for more communication between the world of research and the textbook maker and the teacher. . . . Jean Piaget has led the field in exploration of the development of understanding about the relation of verbalism to concepts. . . . yet I find many teachers unaware of the work he has had published in this country since 1925.

Lou LaBrant, 1970

A crisis is shaping up in public education which affects every teacher everywhere.

Ruth G. Strickland, 1953

New Orleans is the only town I know that offers cocktails with breakfast.

Kenneth Goodman, 1973

The membership in NCRE, in the past six or seven years, has been skewed toward empiricists.

A member, 1970

The Executive Committee has authorized a series of three or four monographs to be published over the next two years on the following topics: bilingualism, spelling, writing, and listening.

Martha L. King in the Spring 1980
NCRE Newsletter

[I remember] the mutually supportive discussions which helped persons making presentations to sharpen their research and their thinking.

Harold G. Shane, 1977

Eighteen members are in arrears two or more years in payment of their dues. They have received at least four dues notices.

Secretary's Annual Report, 1976

I am paying a girl $10.00 a year to keep up with the financial accounting, tax reports and the like, and I paid another girl a small amount for stenographic work over a period of a year and a half.

Letter from J. Conrad Seegers to E. W. Dolch, 1943

The aggrandizement of the teacher's job and the schools and institutions only starts with the introduction of adult ideas into the curriculum. The same thing happens in respect to method. My own notion is that nine-tenths of the progressivism which rather disappointingly manifests itself in the schools today is due to foggy thinking about the real task of the schools. These progressives are ashamed to teach arithmetic and writing and reading. They want to be at these other subjects, and they justify themselves on the child-centered basis. The child, they say, isn't interested in the three R's. But that is precisely the reason why the teacher exists. The child isn't interested in learning these things—at least not naturally—and that makes it hard to teach them. And that in turn is precisely the reason why we have teachers in schools. It is to do a job that is hard. This idea, I think, that the schools should be always interesting and always according to the child's likes is certainly not in conformity with the history of the school as an institution.

Letter from B. R. Buckingham to E. W. Dolch, 1942

Professor Charles C. Fries of the English Department at Michigan would be an interesting person to speak on the subject of grammar. I still prize his stimulating article on the periphrastic future use of shall and will in modern English.

Ernest Horn, 1942

I even remember Ted Clymer when he was brought to his first meeting of the NCRE by Dora V. Smith. He had hair then.

Ralph C. Staiger

It was agreed that the Conference files should be straightened out by a trained secretarial assistant; that a file of past Conference bulletins be built up; that a list of the past officers be prepared according to dates; and that a book of the minutes of the Conference be compiled.

Executive Committee minutes, 1950

If the full values of language as a means of communication are to survive, we need to know more about the ways children grow in language power and acquire ability to use language with understanding and pleasure.

David H. Russell, Preface of 1952–1953 Directory

The Executive Committee discussed the desirability of the preparation of the history of the National Conference on Research in English.

Secretary's Annual Report, 1976

Alvina Burrows is to be honored at the NCTE Books for Children Luncheon on Friday, November 23.

NCRE Newsletter, 1973

Our breakfast meetings were the most significant to me.

Margaret B. Parke, 1977

One type of research concerning textbooks, however, has received little attention. We have apparently been little concerned with what is done with the textbook after it is adopted. More specifically, we have failed to follow the textbook into the classroom with the idea of finding out what use is made of it there. This, then, is the problem to which the Conference, through its Committee on Composition, now wishes to address itself.

Memorandum, 1939

I was immediately preceded as president of NCRE by my sixth grade teacher (Marion Anderson) and my ninth grade English teacher (Agnella Gunn). As a matter of fact, when I ran against Agnella I was beaten.

Thomas D. Horn

Some 1945 suggestions for research: Effect of "Big Little Books" upon children's tastes in reading. The relation between training in rhythms and elementary school reading. To what extent does the study of formal grammar actually improve the use of English?

[Unidentified quotation]

Are we better off? NCRE members resisted merger with NCTE in 1940 because they wanted to protect the organization's $1,300. The treasurer reports that as of November 16, 1980 we had $12,601.70.

Sale of NCRE publications in 1971 totaled 3000 copies.

The recruitment of active members has been too long largely "establishment" people, those who view English in tidy, traditional ways, those who do research in traditional, respectable ways.

Leland B. Jacobs, 1970

. . . the Sheraton-Charles is the only hotel on the Mardi Gras parade route this year.

Roy A. Kress announcing the 1973 meeting in New Orleans

NCRE will never be a large organization. Its intent from the very beginning was to bring together the active leaders in research in English, to provide opportunity for the maximum interaction between its members.

Kenneth Goodman, 1973

When AERA and AASA separated, AERA lost contact with practical problems of school instruction. . . .

Donald D. Durrell, 1980

It might interest you to know that for a "dying" organization, we have received a total of 113 responses regarding the attendance at the meeting and interest in the activities of the Cooperative Research Committee.

Letter from H. Alan Robinson to members of the Cooperative Research Committee

Could you tell me whether the Phillies will be playing in town that weekend?

Letter from Kaven I. McDavid, Jr., to Helen Huus regarding his speaking to NCRE

One of our most regrettable traditions has designated grades four to six as "the grammar grades."

R. L. Lyman

. . . the Conference never has any money to pay speakers, and yet we have, I believe, presented some tremendously stimulating and productive programs.

J. Conrad Seegers, 1946

In my judgment, we should be digging more deeply into writing; including spelling and research in speech. Then, too, we should not overlook this big area of listening.

Emmett A. Betts, 1947

There may be no longer a place for NCRE in the educational scene. The huge professional organizations, however, cannot serve—or do not serve—the original purposes of NCRE. Yet the limitation of active membership in NCRE has seriously diminished its usefulness.

Donald D. Durrell, 1968

The first lunch I attended as a graduate student I was overwhelmed to be seated at the same table with Arthur Gates, and to hear Ruth Strickland, the speaker, for the first time.

Margaret Early

James Squire chairs 76th NSSE Yearbook, Part II, *The Teaching of English: Preschool-College*, to be published early in 1977. Prepared by a committee and authors, most of whom are NCRE members, the yearbook contains contributions from Margaret Early, Walter Petty, Alan Purves, Edmund Farrell, William Jenkins, and others.

Fall 1976 *NCRE Newsletter*

I never envied the breakfast chairman the job of trying to get the "round-the-table" discussions started without having Betts or Lazar be among the first ones.

Emery Bliesmer

One ineradicable memory which I have is of B. R. Buckingham at a breakfast meeting, over 80 but still strong. . . . After a report on ongoing research by Bert Harris in which the problems of Puerto Rican students were discussed, it became Buckingham's turn to speak. He said something like this: "Many years ago when I was principal of Spirer School, I heard almost exactly the same problems about newly-arriving students, but they were the German immigrants."

Ralph C. Staiger

The research committees of both IRA and NCTE could take over easily all the research functions now carried on under the aegis of NCRE.

A member, 1970

Is "research" as used in our title defined only to include experiments whose results are to be expressed quantitatively and interpreted by statisticians and psychologists?

A member, 1970

I believe our organization could serve education effectively by reviewing research studies *qualitatively*.

Comment on a 1970 questionnaire

Would it not be desirable to set up a standing committee to consider the problem of stimulating research?

Gertrude Whipple, 1952

If you are ever up at 6:00 or 6:30 in the mornings, watch New York University's *Sunrise Semester*. Bernice E. Cullinan, New York University, is teaching it and has lots of interesting guests.

Spring 1978 *NCRE Newsletter*

The National Conference on Research in English was organized in 1973.
[He] was NCRE's first president in 1926–27.
The Conference has, since its founding in 1937. . . .

Various NCRE publications

Who needs reminding? 1935 Breakfast in the Blue Room of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Atlantic City: "Eighty-five cents per plate." 1967 Breakfast in La Petite Cafe of the Statler Hilton in New York City: "$3.94 to cover the cost of the breakfast."

[Unidentified quotation]

I believe the future of our organization is bright.

Robert Emans, Fall 1978 *NCRE Newsletter*

Reflections and Projections

Further reflections on NCRE are provided by James R. Squire and Roy C. O'Donnell.

James R. Squire

Individuals who have recently expressed concern over a seeming lack of interest in research-based instruction among members of the National Council of Teachers of English and of the International Reading Association will find some reassurance in Walter T. Petty's illuminating history of the first fifty years of NCRE. Apparently conditions have been always thus. Researchers pressing for opportunities to present new findings; practitioners occupied with more urgent problems. If the many great presidents who moved from offices in NCRE to those in NCTE or IRA have not been able to define a clear path for ideas to flow from research to practice, they at least have tried in many different ways. Petty helps us count the ways.

One cannot read this cogent history without better understanding the involvement of researchers with the teaching and learning of reading and the language arts for many years. The movement from an almost independent convention to cosponsored meetings, from reviews and interpretations of research to sponsorship of new projects, from concern with basic language skills to deep involvement in reading instruction, from behaviorism to cognitive psychology—these mirror the ebb and flow of research interests in this country. At a time when the avenues of communication were restricted, NCRE initiated its monograph series and its reports in *The Elementary English Review*. As *Reading Research Quarterly*, *Research in the Teaching of English*, and the ERIC Clearinghouse began serving the profession, Conference leaders not only supported the new developments but found workshops and conferences a more productive, needed activity. The record is one of adaptability and leadership.

One requirement seems to dominate our agenda for the future—providing a balanced perspective. P. David Pearson, in his presidential comments, called for cyclical reviews of research to ensure that important areas of concern are not overlooked. Given our present fixation on process-oriented studies in comprehending and composing—or with interactive language expression—a periodic review of what is going on in critical other areas—listening, for example, or handwriting or longitudinal studies of language development—could be critical. Perhaps once each decade NCRE should initiate some kind of summative review of where we are and where we are going.

Roy C. O'Donnell

Reading Walter T. Petty's account of the history of the National Conference on Research in English has broadened and deepened my sense of appreciation for this unique organization. The existence of NCRE was not something that had significance to me until about twenty years ago. Unlike Walter Petty, I had no graduate school professor who was active in NCRE, and I regarded it as an exclusive organization with private criteria for selecting its members. After I was accepted as an associate member, I saw nothing to change that initial impression to any great degree. As an associate member I attended meetings from time to time, but I had no opportunity to vote on issues that came up for discussion.

In looking over the "active" membership list (then limited to 100), I noticed that a minority were prominent people who had done significant research, but the majority were people who, as far as I knew, were not actively involved in research related to English. Furthermore,

it seemed that the dominant research interests of the group were focused on the elementary grades and that the primary interest was research in reading. The list of associate members included several young people who were actively involved in a wide range of research interests, but they apparently had little chance of assuming leadership roles until retirement of older members opened up slots on the active membership roster. My impression of NCTE's Standing Committee on Research, a group whose interests overlapped those of NCRE, was more positive than the impression I had of NCRE. This committee was made up of a small group of people who were actively involved in a wide range of research activities, and when I became a committee member (in 1967), I directed most of my attention to its activities.

My impression of NCRE was greatly changed, however, when in 1970 provision was made to expand the active membership list. This expansion allowed several associate members to become active participants in the organization. With the ensuing change in my own membership status in NCRE, my interest in the organization was greatly stimulated and the extent of my participation increased.

As a member of the National Council of Teachers of English, the International Reading Association, and the American Educational Research Association, I frequently had opportunity to attend the NCRE cosponsored sessions at annual conventions, and I became acquainted with a growing number of NCRE members. I had opportunity to participate in discussions about several NCRE projects, and I read various NCRE publications. However, it was not until I read this history of the organization by Petty that I became fully aware of the outstanding stature of NCRE's early leaders and the magnitude of its activities over the fifty-year period of its existence. Petty documents the relationship between NCRE and several significant events that I had not previously associated with the organization.

Over the years that I have been a member of NCRE, and particularly during the years I have served on the Executive Committee, I have given a great deal of thought to the purposes served by the organization and to the questions of how to get more members involved in NCRE activities and how to increase the organization's effectiveness. During the year I served as president, I became keenly aware of the fact that with no annual convention of the full membership and no official journal, it was extremely difficult for some of our members to establish and maintain a sense of distinct identification with the organization. Although the *NCRE Newsletter* provides a means of communication with the entire membership, there is apparently a difference in the sense of group identity some members have

with NCRE and the identity they have with other professional organizations such as NCTE and IRA.

An annual convention of NCRE, separate from meetings of other groups, would undoubtedly give the organization more visibility and there would be several resulting advantages. Programs might receive more attention than they seem to receive now, and participation in them might carry a greater sense of prestige. Since most NCRE members are affiliated with other professional groups, however, it is hardly feasible to expect them to add another national conference to their calendars. At a time when institutional budgets for travel have been drastically reduced, most of us are looking for ways to decrease rather than increase the number of meetings we attend.

A separate research journal sponsored by NCRE could also give the organization greater prominence than it now has. The various research activities in which our members are involved might provide the number of good manuscripts required to sustain a research quarterly. The possibility of establishing such an organ was in fact seriously discussed a few years ago. The feasibility of the project seemed doubtful then, and the probability of our undertaking such a venture in the future is remote. As long as the pages of such journals as *Research in the Teaching of English, Reading Research Quarterly,* and *American Educational Research Journal* are available to NCRE members, it will be difficult to justify the expense of supporting another journal.

A pessimistic view of NCRE's current situation and role might lead one to question the continuing need for NCRE as a separate organization. It probably is not obvious to an outsider, for example, how NCRE differs from some of the Special Interest Groups in AERA. The Elementary Section of NCTE has for several years been a vital group, with leaders highly sensitive to the needs of language arts teachers in elementary schools, and IRA now provides for almost every conceivable interest of reading teachers and researchers. With the attention NCTE and IRA now give to research in their journals, their convention programs, and their annual research awards, one might ask if there is still a real need for NCRE.

As I interpret the historical information Petty has presented, had NCTE at the outset given as much attention to research and the teaching of English language arts in the elementary grades as it now does, NCRE probably never would have been established. At the same time, I believe Petty amply documents the fact that NCRE has served a vital purpose in stimulating research and in disseminating the results of research related to the English language arts. The bulletins published by NCRE over the years have addressed most of the topics of interest to language arts teachers, and these publications have a

practical aspect that is lacking in many other research bulletins. A prime example of NCRE's potential for stimulating research is found in Petty's account of the genesis of the First Grade Reading Studies. It is doubtful that a committee drawn exclusively from NCTE, IRA, or AERA could have mobilized in such a short time the talent and effort required to accomplish such a project. A recent example of NCRE's accomplishment in synthesizing and disseminating the results of research is *Secondary School Reading: What Research Reveals for Classroom Practice*. This book, edited by Allen Berger and H. Alan Robinson, was published in 1982 through the joint efforts of NCRE and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills. Its chapters represent the contributions of more than twenty outstanding members of NCRE.

The substantial accomplishments of NCRE over the past half-century have, in my opinion, firmly established its reason for being, and I am convinced that there is a continuing need for the kind of service the organization can provide. While its functions may overlap those of other groups, they are not duplicated by any group, and it is doubtful that any other group can effectively fulfill NCRE's mission. If continuing need is the criterion for continued existence, NCRE's future should be as secure as that of any professional organization. Like other organizations, obviously, NCRE will have to undergo certain changes in order to remain useful. If I had the power to chart the future course of NCRE, the changes I would make would be in the nature of adjustments rather than radical alterations.

To enhance our sense of identity, I would seek ways to get more members involved in NCRE activities. Although we regularly have cosponsored sessions at NCTE, IRA, and AERA conventions, many NCRE members seldom attend. With no separate annual convention, the question of how to get more membership involvement is not easily answered, but perhaps more deliberate efforts to change the earlier image of NCRE as an exclusive group would be helpful. The apparent custom of having most of the organization's work done by Executive Committee members, past and present, may be difficult to change, but it does not encourage the breadth of participation needed for a vital organization. Encouraging members to attend open meetings of the Executive Committee might have a salutary effect.

Another desirable change might be the enlargement of the scope of the *NCRE Newsletter*. While the wisdom of attempting to establish a new research journal is doubtful, there may be ways to broaden the function and enhance the usefulness of the existing periodical. In addition to brief items about activities of members, it might be possible to print somewhat more formal items about research in progress

and research recently completed. Each issue might also include short articles or essays on topics of interest to members. Some of these might be solicited from individual members, and others might be selected from a pool of manuscripts received from voluntary contributors. The *NCRE Newsletter* might also include information about research activities of related organizations, as well as possible sources of funds to support specific kinds of research.

To facilitate our publications process, I would seek ways to provide more financial support to authors and editors. Members who accept responsibility for projects have to find ways to complete them while performing their regular duties at their employing institutions. If NCRE could provide grants large enough to enable writers to obtain released time, the interval between initiation and completion of projects could be considerably shortened. In the past, some worthwhile projects were left incomplete, and others lost potential impact because of lengthy delays. Adequate financial support might make NCRE projects more attractive to more research scholars, with a resulting increase in both volume and degree of excellence.

In brief, my wish for the future of NCRE is that we do even better the kinds of things we have been doing well. While it may be true that other organizations can serve most of the purposes that our founders had in mind when they launched the organization, it seems to me that they can be served better with our help. Rather than duplicate the research efforts of NCTE, IRA, and AERA, we can do a great deal to complement them. Since most of our members also hold membership in one or more of these groups, NCRE has the unique potential for synthesizing, interpreting, and implementing the findings of the best research related to the English language arts. If we make the most of our resources, I believe we can realize that potential and make our second half-century even more productive than the first.

Appendixes

Appendix A: Major Officers of the National Conference on Research in English

Year	*President*	*Vice-President*	*Secretary-Treasurer*
1932-33	Marion R. Trabue	Harry A. Greene	C. C. Certain
1933-34	Harry A. Greene	Warren W. Coxe	C. C. Certain
1934-35	Walter S. Guiler	Bess Goodykoontz	C. C. Certain
1935-36	B. R. Buckingham	Josephine MacLatchy	C. C. Certain
1936-37	Robert C. Pooley	Angela M. Broening	C. C. Certain
1937-38	Maude McBroom	Bessie Bacon Goodrich	C. C. Certain
1938-39	Angela M. Broening	Paul McKee	C. C. Certain
1939-40	Paul McKee	Dora V. Smith	C. C. Certain
1940-41	Dora V. Smith	Mildred A. Dawson	C. C. Certain
1941-42	Mildred A. Dawson	E. W. Dolch	J. Conrad Seegers
1942-43	E. W. Dolch	Ethel Mabie Falk	J. Conrad Seegers
1943-44	E. W. Dolch	Ethel Mabie Falk	J. Conrad Seegers
1944-45	Ethel Mabie Falk	Dora V. Smith	J. Conrad Seegers
1945-46	Ethel Mabie Falk	Dora V. Smith	J. Conrad Seegers
1946-47	Ethel Mabie Falk	Dora V. Smith	J. Conrad Seegers
1947-48	Bernice E. Leary	Gerald A. Yoakam	Mildred A. Dawson
1948-49	Gerald A. Yoakam	Harold A. Anderson	Mildred A. Dawson
1949-50	Harold A. Anderson	Bess Goodykoontz	Gertrude Whipple
1950-51	Edgar Dale	Ruth G. Strickland	Gertrude Whipple
1951-52	John J. DeBoer	Roy Ivan Johnson	Gertrude Whipple
1952-53	David H. Russell	Ruth G. Strickland	Gertrude Whipple
1953-54	Ruth G. Strickland	A. Sterl Artley	Helen A. Murphy
1954-55	Gertrude Whipple	Angela M. Broening	Helen A. Murphy
1955-56	A. Sterl Artley	Marion A. Anderson	Helen A. Murphy
1956-57	Marion A. Anderson	Mary Agnella Gunn	Helen A. Murphy
1957-58	Mary Agnella Gunn	Thomas D. Horn	Helen A. Murphy
1958-59	Thomas D. Horn	Ralph C. Staiger	Helen A. Murphy
1959-60	Ralph C. Staiger	Helen M. Robinson	Margaret Early

Year	*President*	*Vice-President*	*Secretary-Treasurer*
1960–61	Helen M. Robinson	Constance M. McCullough	Margaret Early
1961–62	Constance M. McCullough	Russell G. Stauffer	Margaret Early
1962–63	Russell G. Stauffer	Margaret Early	Helen Huus
1963–64	Margaret Early	Theodore Clymer	Helen Huus
1964–65	Theodore Clymer	Jeanne S. Chall	Helen Huus
1965–66	Jeanne S. Chall	Mary C. Austin	Helen Huus
1966–67	Mary C. Austin	Helen Huus	William Eller
1967–68	Helen Huus	Albert J. Harris	William Eller
1968–69	Albert J. Harris	Walter T. Petty	William Eller
1969–70	Walter T. Petty	Dolores Durkin	Coleman Morrison
1970–71	Dolores Durkin	H. Alan Robinson	Coleman Morrison
1971–72	H. Alan Robinson	Kenneth Goodman	Coleman Morrison
1972–73	Kenneth Goodman	Richard Hodges	Roy A. Kress

Year	*President*	*President-Elect*	*Secretary-Treasurer*
1973–74	Richard Hodges	Coleman Morrison	Roy A. Kress
1974–75	Coleman Morrison	Alvina Treut Burrows	Roy A. Kress
1975–76	Alvina Treut Burrows	Sara W. Lundsteen	Helen K. Smith
1976–77	Sara W. Lundsteen	Samuel Weintraub	Helen K. Smith
1977–78	Samuel Weintraub	Robert Emans	Helen K. Smith
1978–79	Robert Emans	Martha L. King	Johanna S. DeStefano, Secretary; James R. Squire, Treasurer
1979–80	Martha L. King	P. David Pearson	DeStefano/Squire
1980–81	P. David Pearson	Roy C. O'Donnell	DeStefano/Squire
1981–82	Roy C. O'Donnell	James R. Squire	Bernice Cullinan, Secretary; Eileen Tway, Treasurer
1982–83	James R. Squire	Johanna S. DeStefano	Cullinan/Tway
1983–84	Johanna S. DeStefano	Robert Dykstra	Jerome Harste, Secretary; Eileen Tway, Treasurer

Appendix B: The Bulletins

The bulletins published by NCRE are listed below in chronological order. The first nine bulletins were numbered and were published annually (except the eighth, which was published in the same year as the ninth). Since 1941 bulletins have not been numbered, nor have they appeared annually.

Most bulletins, especially after the early ones, were written by several persons. The names listed are editors of the bulletin committees.

Research in Elementary Language: A Report of Problems and Progress (1933), Harry A. Greene

A Critical Summary of Selective Research in Elementary School Composition, Language, and Grammar (1934), Walter S. Guiler and Emmett A. Betts

Reading Disabilities and Their Correction: A Critical Summary of Selective Research (1935), Emmett A. Betts

Research Problems in Reading in the Elementary School (1936) Donald D. Durrell

Principles of Method in Elementary English Composition (1937), Harry A. Greene

Elementary School Language Textbooks: A Survey of Their Use and a Summary of Related Research Studies (1938), Mildred A. Dawson

Vocabulary Problems in the Elementary School (1939), J. Conrad Seegers

Evaluating Instruction in English in the Elementary Schools of New York (1941), Dora V. Smith

Reading in the Intermediate Grades (1941), Gertrude Whipple

Readability (1949), Edgar Dale

Education and the Mass Media of Communication (1950), John J. DeBoer

Readiness for Reading and Related Language Arts: A Digest of Current Research (1950), Nila B. Smith

Interpreting Language: An Essential of Understanding (1951), J. Conrad Seegers

Areas of Research Interest in the Language Arts (1952), Nila B. Smith

Factors That Influence Language Growth (1952), Dorothea McCarthy

Child Development and the Language Arts (1953), David H. Russell

Interrelationships among the Language Arts (1954), A. Sterl Artley

Critical Reading: An Introduction (1959), E. Elona Sochor

Children's Writing: Research in Composition and Related Skills (1961), Alvina Treut Burrows

Research Methods in the Language Arts (1961), Carleton M. Singleton

Development of Taste in Literature (1963), Nila B. Smith

Language and the Higher Thought Processes (1965), Russell G. Stauffer

Research on Handwriting and Spelling (1966), Thomas D. Horn

Research in Oral Language (1967), Walter T. Petty

Readability in 1968 (1968), John R. Bormuth

What We Know about High School Reading (1969), Mary Agnella Gunn

Research Bases for Oral Language Instruction (1971), Thomas D. Horn

Teacher Effectiveness in Elementary Language Arts: A Progress Report (1974), H. Alan Robinson and Alvina Treut Burrows

Help for the Reading Teacher: New Directions in Research (1975), William D. Page

Help for the Teacher of Written Composition: New Directions in Research (1976), Sara W. Lundsteen

Secondary School Reading: What Research Reveals for Classroom Practice (1982), Allen Berger and H. Alan Robinson (Cosponsored by NCRE and ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills)